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THE TWO BLOCKADES

IT is still too early to judge whether the steadily increasing severity of the air-attacks on this country marks the beginning of a Blitzkrieg or is the opening stage of a long process of beleaguerment. But whichever is Hitler's intention, we may assume that, as the winter draws on, the war will relapse, for a period at least, into a struggle of blockade and counter-blockade, of propaganda and counter-propaganda. And when the campaigning season returns next April, success may well go to that side which has undermined the morale of its opponents. Hitler is ready to use those dreary months to attempt the same strategy of political warfare which he employed against France to such effect. He will try to starve us and at the same time to lay the blame both for his and our blockade upon "British plutocracy." To the peoples within his new Continental empire, and to ourselves, he will whisper that the war could end at once if the selfish imperialists and international financiers of London were liquidated. Meanwhile outside Europe he will be busy persuading the financiers and business men of the New World that they too cannot afford to see their European markets cut off by the British Navy. Combining an appeal to humanity with an appeal to their business interests, and adding a hint that, even if Britain is not defeated, she cannot win the war, he will hope to convert America into an unconscious accomplice in his plans and thus to create not only a physical but a moral blockade of these islands. Of these two blockades the moral is the more dangerous. If we permit ourselves to be isolated from the world's sympathies by Nazi propaganda, victory will indeed be impossible.

That is why it is important that we should be now preparing not only a physical, but a moral blockade of the Nazis, and should be ready, where the interests of the two blockades conflict, to give them an equal importance in our calculations. We shall not win this war, as we won the last, merely by the superiority in the size and equipment of our armies or air force; we shall not win it by starving the Nazis into submission. The physical blockade is only an effective instrument of war if it creates a will to revolution among the peoples of Europe and permits us to enjoy friendly relations with the New World. Without the moral blockade it may become a positive advantage to our opponents.

For this reason we welcome Professor Huxley's proposal in a letter to the *Times* that we should take counsel with the Americas and the Colonial countries, and consider ways and means of dealing with the vast surpluses which will accumulate overseas as the result of the blockade. That is an extremely practical suggestion which demands immediate consideration, but it only deals with half the problem. The other aspect is discussed by H. N. Brailsford in a letter which we publish on another page. Mr. Brailsford urges that, though the Hoover scheme is of course impossible, we should work out with the United States a scheme whereby foodstuffs may pass into the occupied countries of Europe, under a neutral control, which would prevent them reaching the Nazis. But is any neutral control really possible in Hitler's Europe? Moreover, at the same time as we are blockading Europe, Hitler is blockading us; and he has added the tactics of unrestricted U-boat warfare to attacks on our merchant shipping and lightships from the air. If we are to agree to any scheme for permitting the passage of neutral shipping through our blockade of Europe, the Nazis must also agree to permit neutral shipping bringing food from overseas to pass through their blockade of this island. Our fleet can, of course, ensure that we shall not starve this winter, but that is no reason why we should permit Hitler to feed the countries for which he has assumed responsibility, while he continues to attempt to starve us out. The cause of humanity will not be furthered by any scheme which enables Hitler to exploit our humanitarian feelings for the consolidation of the Third Reich.

On one point Mr. Brailsford is certainly right. We must take the initiative and challenge the Nazis by a bold offer, which will demonstrate our willingness to assist the conquered peoples, while the war goes on, provided Hitler makes concessions of equal importance. We recently suggested one such offer—that we would immediately lift the blockade

against any territory from which Hitler withdraws his armies of occupation. We are glad to see that the *Times* has taken up this suggestion. But something more precise and immediate is necessary if we are to convince Europe and America that we are in earnest. It may well be some such formula as Mr. Brailsford proposes, if it were to apply to the German blockade, would meet the case. Whether the Nazis would accept it is a different matter. If they did not, we should have added to our physical blockade a moral blockade of formidable dimensions. Against a conqueror who preferred the blockade of Britain to the welfare of the peoples within his empire a revolutionary hatred could be kindled more deadly than mere starvation.

The Battle for Britain

The struggle for the control of the Channel and of our coastal areas increases day by day in intensity. Up till now it is safe to affirm that the damage done, both to convoys and to objectives ashore, has been in no way commensurate with the scale of the attacks and the losses inflicted upon the raiders. If Hitler has no secret weapon, we can look forward with a sober confidence to the battles of the next five weeks. In this phase of the war we can rely upon traditions of courage and devotion which no innovations can render out of date. The spirit and pertinacity both of the Navy and of the Merchant Marine should enable us to keep the Port of London open. In the second place the wisdom of demanding the most exacting tests of our aircraft and a long and strenuous training of our pilots has been overwhelmingly confirmed. Against the mass-production methods of the Germans we can pit an élite whose self-confidence is only increased by the numerical odds against them. In the third place, the quality of our A.R.P. workers and auxiliary firemen has been amply demonstrated. Here we have something approaching the idea of a people's army, and in this field the Nazis cannot compete with us. In a police-state, these services are regarded not as a piece of self-help organised by the common people but as yet another branch of the omnipotent war-machine. The air-raid warden who is also a Government spy is of small comfort in an air-raid. Lastly the morale of the people in the most heavily raided areas remains high. Stolidly—unimaginatively, the critic will say—the working man is accepting the new conditions of life and making the best of them. In some towns, where the shock was sudden and severe, there have been acute emotional disturbances below the surface of composure. That was inevitable, and the remedy is not propaganda but good food and sleep. It may well be wise to remind people to make their bedrooms, where possible, on the ground floor and even to begin a " More Sleep " campaign, with the slogan that the patriot goes to bed before 10 p.m. Such a campaign should not be laughed at. Even the bravest will not stand the strain unless he can get sufficient sleep. Another improvement would be to limit air-raid warnings to built-up areas, instead of disturbing the sleep of the A.R.P. staff in country districts every time the bombers pass on their way to an objective.

The War in Europe

Meanwhile Hitler's strategy remains obscure. In Eastern Europe and the Balkans he is clearly relying upon his vast military superiority to keep Russia " loyal " to her agreements and to limit her expansion to well-defined zones. This hash can be settled after the main war is over. His immediate purpose is almost certainly the control of the Mediterranean. Here, despite the desperate efforts of General Franco to retain his non-belligerent status and of M. Salazar to keep Portugal out of war, Nazi pressure is relentless. We believe that bold action in support of the anti-Axis forces in Spain is still possible and that it would be wiser to anticipate the Nazis than to leave the initiative to them. At the Eastern end of the Mediterranean our position is extremely difficult, but by no means hopeless. The French defection has left us vastly weaker on land than our opponents, both in numbers and in equipment, and made communications exceptionally hazardous. Even Mussolini, who knows the quality of his army, has taken the offensive in Somaliland despite the summer heat, and is massing his troops for an attack on Egypt. It will be no easy question to decide to what extent we can afford to remove troops from this country to reinforce our Near Eastern Army.

The French Trials

Alexander Werth writes: The Riom trials are going to last for weeks. They have a double importance. They are calculated to provide the unfortunate people of Pétain France with a lot of scapegoats; and they are intended to please the German and Italian conquerors. What could be more pleasing to Hitler, who spent years protesting against the " war guilt lie " in the Versailles Treaty, than to see the French putting their own politicians up for trial and accusing them of having started the war? The Germans of 1919 were clever enough, with regard to the future, not to stage a trial of the Kaiser; for the Germans the Riom trial must be an exhilarating spectacle of France's lack of that national solidarity which they themselves possessed to an extraordinary degree, even in bad moments. It is scarcely surprising that the Germans and Italians should, so far, have shown nothing but contempt for the Riom stunt.

In France itself the trials are giving the Vichy rulers an opportunity to wreak vengeance on their former political opponents. *Gringoire* will wallow in dirt and recrimination, and already the Vichy press prophesies that Mandel will be sentenced to death, and many of the other " culprits " to years of imprisonment. One can see the leer on Bonnet's ugly face, as, in his capacity of " chief witness for the prosecution," he reports one Cabinet secret after another to show up Mandel's crimes against France. A London diplomat once said that Bonnet took a " voluptuous pleasure " in treachery; so it will, no doubt, give him equal pleasure to denounce Daladier, who, poor man, refused through thick and thin, and against his better judgment, to get rid of Bonnet to the bitter end—even though he certainly knew of his and his wife's constant hobnobbing with Abetz and other German spies and agents from the *Comité France-Allemagne*. If, last winter, Daladier had listened to Kerillis's advice, Bonnet might well have been in the dock, and Mandel in the witness box; thanks to Bonnet's German friends, it is now the other way round. To some in France the country's defeat has been a blessing.

The Supreme Court, like the Reichstag trial at Leipzig, is presided over by a perfectly honourable magistrate; but the other judges include some odd specimens: a pro-Fascist professor like M. Ripert and, stranger still, a M. Watteau, noted for his close association in the past with General Duseigneur, of Cagoulard fame. The Cagoulards were the terrorist organisation in France of the Fascist International. It is doubtful if the trial will help the unhappy people in Pétain France to forget their troubles, which are great. The Germans have set up an invisible Great Wall between the rich occupied part and the poor and over-populated " Pétain " part of the country; few refugees are allowed to return to their homes in the occupied part, and the Germans refuse to allow any food to go South. The food goes to Germany instead. When Pétain France says she is faced with hunger, the Germans glibly advise her to beg America for food; or else they say that " it is the moral duty of the British to feed you; for they dragged you into the war." All this is presumably part of a long-term policy; the German press clearly indicates that Southern France has hitherto been under-populated, and that the refugees had better stay there as best they can, so that the Germans may use the rich North and West for colonising purposes. The Vichy press, in the meantime, is clamouring in vain for a " return to normal." Nor do the Germans want the Vichy Government in Paris, which they prefer to be run on good Nazi lines with Doriot and the like assisting the military authorities and the Gestapo. The Nazi anti-capitalist and anti-Vichy propaganda, carried on among the bewildered and betrayed Paris workers, is quite slick on the face of it. But everything depends on whether Hitler's war against England succeeds or fails.

" Refugees " or " Prisoners of War " or Criminals?

Last week we noted that the official address of refugees deported to Australia was given by the Home Office as " Prisoners of War Information Bureau, Melbourne." That this is no mere technicality is shown first by the fact that lists of refugees have been handed to the Swiss Legation, which represents the German Government with regard to prisoners of war, and secondly by the recent visit to internment camps of an embarrassed member of that Legation. Unfortunately the refugee does not even possess all the privileges accorded to " Prisoners of War " by the Geneva Convention of 1929: in fact his

position is highly ambiguous, as he is in most cases a person with no country. It is worth noting, however, that in 1938 the British Government did sign a Convention relating to refugees and it may well be asked whether the policy pursued in the last few weeks is considered to be in accord either with the letter or with the spirit of this undertaking. True the Convention permits refugees from Germany to be expelled if such a measure "is dictated by reasons of national security and public order," but it also gives them access to Courts of Law and the benefits of legal assistance. Moreover it appoints a Commissioner "to provide for political and legal protection of refugees" and to superintend the application of their legal status as defined in the Convention. This must surely mean both that the refugees can and should look to the High Commissioner for Refugees as their protector and that the British Government can and should make that fact known to the refugees, not merely by a wireless announcement but through the camp commandants, and also inform those it has transported abroad. The High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Emerson, has an office and a staff in London, and is a member of the recently appointed Committee of Three. Why has he not been recognised as their proper representative and given a staff adequate to the job? Once this were done, the refugees could immediately be recognised as differing in *status* from Prisoners of War, the internment camps could be reorganised as Refugee Centres, and the refugees could receive that free legal assistance which they desperately need. Meanwhile, we learn that in Holloway Prison, anti-Nazi women internees are still imprisoned in the same section as pro-Nazis, while in Pentonville conditions, as disclosed by a recent inspection, are really shocking. Four hundred persons of twenty nationalities have been kept there, shut up for nearly all day in cells. The blame rests not on the Prison Authorities, who cannot cope with the situation, but with those responsible for the internment orders.

The Swinton Committee

M.P.s were so dissatisfied with the Government's refusal last week to state the salaries paid to members of the Swinton Committee that Mr. Stokes gave notice that he would raise the matter on the adjournment, Mr. Attlee explained that Lord Swinton (but not apparently his colleagues on the executive of this Committee) had been chosen this work by the War Cabinet; and the Trade Union leader recently appointed was Mr. Wall, who has shown in the past a real concern for democratic liberties. Neither of these members of the Committee is paid. The House could see no possible reason of public interest for refusing to divulge the salaries paid to Sir Joseph Ball and Mr. W. C. Crocker. Mr. Stokes was also entitled to ask why Lord Swinton was considered a "suitable person for this office." Mr. Attlee and Mr. Churchill, who understand the necessity of frank dealing with the public, must surely realise the vital distinction between asking for secret and technical information (which none of us want) and for maintaining the democratic right of control over public appointments. We have the right to know the salaries paid to public officials and the duty to demand that those who compose a confidential Committee should be men in whose political opinions and connections we can repose complete confidence. There is on the face of it little to inspire such confidence in the record of Lord Swinton, who has important interests in the City, but whose success as Minister of Air and in various other Ministerial posts was not at all remarkable, nor in those of Sir Joseph Ball or of Mr. W. C. Crocker, who seem also to represent that section of the Conservative Party whose policy has been so decisively repudiated by the present Government, and which has been violently hostile not only to the Labour Party, which now shares the responsibility of National Government, but also to Mr. Churchill and to all those who were critical of Mr. Chamberlain's policy.

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GET ON OR GET OUT

EVER since Labour entered the Government, a heavy responsibility has rested on its two representatives in the War Cabinet. In their several departments, Ernest Bevin, Herbert Morrison and A. V. Alexander could achieve considerable improvements of organisation, but the fundamental task of imposing a rational war-economy upon British industry and agriculture could only be carried out by men above the departmental level. The Labour ministers have the special advantage of an intimate knowledge of working-class conditions and a theoretical grasp of the principles of planning. For this reason the country expected them—and above all Arthur Greenwood, the Chairman of the Production Council—to take the lead in the economic reconstruction necessary to victory.

How much has the Churchill-Labour Government accomplished in this field? Its successes are obvious. It has transformed an apathetic working class into a willing collaborator, ready to sacrifice its most cherished privileges. And by summoning the workers to feats of superhuman endurance, it achieved an astonishing spurt of production. For this the chief credit goes to Lord Beaverbrook and his two Labour colleagues. But what of the long-term planning both of our industrial and financial policy? Here, we must admit, the record is chiefly one of failure.

The most notable failure has been in a sphere of action for which the Labour Ministers have least direct responsibility. There is universal agreement that Sir Kingsley Wood's Budget solved none of the problems which he stated so clearly in his own opening speech. It was another makeshift, totally ineffective in checking the inflationary tendencies of our present methods of war finance. Whether the Labour Ministers protested, whether they put forward any more constructive proposals, we do not know. The fact remains that more drastic methods will have to be used if we are to avoid an uncontrolled inflation. That even Sir Kingsley admitted by his own phrase, an *interim* Budget.

The budgetary problem however, is insoluble if considered in isolation. The real task facing the Government is that of mobilising for war purposes the largest practicable part of the nations productive power, with the minimum of loss and suffering to the main body of the public. This fundamental economic task must be carried out by the Supply Ministers under the supervision of Mr. Greenwood. It is Morrison's task so to organise the Ministry of Supply that war orders are rightly distributed over the country in relation to the available supplies of labour, plant and other resources of production, and to ensure that each firm is put to the jobs it can do best and assured of regular supplies of materials and of a regular flow of orders that will keep its machines and its workers in full use. It is Bevin's task to distribute the available labour in relation to the needs of the war industries, to train workers to eke out scarce types of skill, and to co-operate with Morrison in securing that waste shall not occur through the building of factories in inaccessible spots, or through the unnecessary movement of labour over long distances, to cause fresh difficulties in already congested areas. Finally, it is Greenwood's task to co-ordinate the activities not merely of Morrison and Bevin, but also of Beaverbrook, Alexander, Duncan, and the other Ministers whose departments are claimants for shares in the supply of scarce types of labour, scarce machines, scarce means of transport—in short, of scarce factors of production of every sort and kind.

How far are these urgent tasks being fulfilled? There has been, since the advent of the new Government, notable increase of activity at both the Supply Ministry and the Ministry of Labour as well as a welcome drive in the new Ministry of Aircraft Production. Herbert Morrison has got rid of a few important obstructionists; and there is evidence that he is making a real effort to ensure that new contracts shall be distributed with less exclusive regard to the claims—powerfully represented in most of the Controls—of the big firms and trade associations. There is some attempt to spread contracts to smaller firms, and to reduce the balance between areas which have got too many orders and areas which have too few. There are at any rate the beginnings of an attempt at decentralisation, through the creation of area machinery for hunting out unused industrial capacity and harnessing it to the national effort.

Meanwhile, at the Ministry of Labour, Ernest Bevin is on the move. Last week's Industrial Registration Order is a serious effort to ensure that skilled men who are urgently needed shall not be wasted on non-essential work. By compelling men who possess the right type of skill to register, even if they have left the trades concerned, as well as compelling employers to register such men, Mr. Bevin gets a double check on the available supplies of skilled labour, and should be

able to bring considerable help to those parts of the industrial machine which are at present held up for lack of the right key men.

So far, so good. The new Order is indispensable, because skilled men are at the moment acutely scarce. Indeed, it is the lack of key men that is preventing the use of very large numbers of less skilled and unskilled workers, and causing in some areas spells of inactivity for considerable bodies of workers already in employment. It is quite useless to make appeals for great numbers of women, or even men, to volunteer for war work, because they cannot be employed until the shortage of skilled workers has been overcome. Dilution alone will not achieve this, however energetically it is pressed. It cannot be achieved except by means of a well-considered scheme of training. There is every sign that the Trade Unions are not merely willing, but eager, to work dilution to the full. They have indeed shown much more eagerness than most of the employers. But dilution cannot be pressed for without training. Government training centres alone cannot do the job; and, in spite of Ernest Bevin's appeal last week, it is doubtful whether employers will ever voluntarily put any adequate training scheme into practice.

Why is it that so few employers have provided facilities for training, or even shown much desire to take advantage of the opportunity for dilution? Partly because they have been so busy on current orders that they have let plans for increasing output in the future slide. But is it not also true that many of them are reluctant to face changes in industrial practice which will widen the range of their competitors and create plant which might become redundant after the war? It is no answer to say that E.P.T. is now up to 100 per cent.; for employers are influenced not by the level of profits now, but by their expectations about their ability to make profits when the war is over.

These considerations, together with many others arising out of the working of the contract system, suggest that the present system of placing orders for munitions is radically at fault. It is not enough for the State to levy 100 per cent. E.P.T. and to "control" the essential establishments—especially if the control is in practice vested largely in nominees of the "controlled." The only effective remedy is to take over the establishments lock, stock and barrel, and then set them to work directly under the orders of the State.

This method would have the enormous advantage of making possible a real economic plan. It would stop the chaotic sub-contracting which is at present wasting important resources in unnecessary transport and making of jigs and tools. It would make possible in such a place as Coventry the pooling of scarce types of machines and skilled workers, so that jobs or men could be exchanged between factories, and balanced, continuous production secured. It would make the technicians and managers, as well as the workers, direct servants of the public, and do away with the divided loyalties to the State and Mammon which at present stand in the way of effective economic mobilisation.

But to consider such problems is to move into the sphere of the Chairman of the Production Council. It is Arthur Greenwood who should lay down the general principles of our policy and co-ordinate the work of the departments. There is little evidence that he is doing so. Are priorities being rationally planned between, say, the Supply Ministry and Lord Beaverbrook's Aircraft Ministry? Has anyone settled the relative importance of munitions and machinery exports, or of exports of consumers' goods and the claims of the home market? We may hope that these issues are being faced by the Production Council and by the War Cabinet; but Arthur Greenwood's speech last week gave little grounds for confidence.

Our conclusion is that whereas Morrison and Bevin have not yet done enough, Mr. Greenwood has done nothing effective. Morrison ought to be taking over the key industries completely: Bevin ought to be embarking on a compulsory training scheme as the complement to his latest effort to dig the key skilled men out of unimportant jobs. These are not criticisms of the Ministers concerned, so much as suggestions for further action. The real weakness is higher up—in the War Cabinet itself. Arthur Greenwood has failed to insist on a proper co-ordination of departmental policies in terms of a comprehensive economic plan. Only when this has been done will it be possible to get a tolerable Budget, as the financial correlate of an economic policy devised in real terms of men, machines, materials and means of transport. This is the job which must be done, if the energy displayed by Ernest Bevin, Herbert Morrison and Lord Beaverbrook is not to be frittered away. Not only the Labour Movement but the whole country is growing impatient of Mr. Greenwood's easy-going pace. He has a long record of service; everyone knows that his heart is in the right place in this war. He is not a vain man and he must be conscious of his inadequacy in his present post. He should make way for a colleague who can do the job.

LIBERTY IN WARTIME

In time of war special powers are necessarily granted to the police; we voluntarily accept some narrowing of our liberties. All the more important that the special powers granted should not be abused and that those who administer them should act with understanding and commonsense. Nothing could be more damaging to national unity than that the idea should grow up that the police are part of a government machinery over which the people have no control. One of the most important distinctions between democracy and autocracy is that in a democracy people should believe it—and not smile ironically—when they read a Ministry of Information leaflet saying that this is "A People's war—A people's government." Irreparable damage has been done to the democratic cause by the arbitrary and cruel treatment of refugees. The country has in some degree been roused on that issue, and some slight improvement has been made. A few exiles have been released, but where one Rudolf Olden is set free a hundred willing fighters in the anti-Fascist cause remain in internment, cut off from their families, not knowing whether they are to be deported, released or indefinitely detained. The whole cause of the war of liberation, our whole attitude to life, our outlook on the future of Europe is bound up with that cause. We have made a start in convincing people that we must regard these people as our friends, and Europe not as a bundle of States, but as a continent, unified in slavery to Hitler which we must liberate. We have made a start. It will need the full effort of every democrat to make the idea effective before it is too late.

Aliens are not the only people in England who have been treated arbitrarily in recent weeks. Out of many possible examples, let us take the present use of the "Insulting Words and Behaviour" clause of the Public Order Act of 1936. In many parts of the country men and women have recently been arrested and punished with fines or imprisonment for saying things which they are legally entitled to say, or for selling pamphlets or papers whose contents are unexceptionable. It is not even alleged that the words spoken or the pamphlet or paper sold were in contravention of any law. The charge of "insulting words and behaviour" has been made because someone or other has been made angry by the words or pamphlet or paper, or alleged to have been made angry or, in the judgment of the police, might have been made angry by them with the possible result that a breach of the peace might have ensued. In one case a man was fined £5 for distributing a leaflet entitled *The People Must Act*, the substance of which was merely, as the Ministry of Information would say, that this is a People's War in which common people must defend their liberties. The only evidence was that of a woman who said she had not read the leaflet but was annoyed by the title In another case a man was given two months for saying that the British ruled over 300 million slaves in India. We do not suggest that this was a wise remark, but it was not in itself an illegal remark. All that the police have now to do in such cases is to suggest that the remark might have annoyed somebody. This is an extraordinary principle. Few readers of the *Daily Herald* or *News Chronicle* can fail, at times, to have been made angry by the *Times* or the *Observer*, but no one has suggested that the words that caused annoyance were insulting in the meaning of the Act or were likely to create a breach of the peace. In a word, to consider the offence not in the context of the words, but in their actual or possible effect on people to whom they were addressed, is to make any strong expression of opinion, either by word of mouth or on paper, a possible offence. There is no political argument and no political writing which cannot make somebody angry. Nor, if we want national unity, is it a satisfactory answer to point out that prosecution is only likely in cases where the angry feelings aroused are among what used to be called "the best people."

A second abuse to which attention should be called occurs under the rights of search given to the police under Section 88A of the Defence Regulations. Be it noted that in order to obtain a warrant for a personal and house search, the police must satisfy a Justice of the Peace, or in cases of emergency a Superintendent of the Police, that there is reasonable ground for believing that an offence has been or is being committed, and that evidence of such an offence is to be found on the premises which they propose to search. In the course of search the police are only entitled to seize property which there is reasonable ground for thinking will serve as evidence of an offence.

Under this section houses and persons have been searched in many parts of England. In some cases the search has been justified, and we make no complaint that searches have been made. But it is impossible to believe in many cases that there was reasonable ground for believing

that an offence had been or was being committed. Of what offence can the possession of the following books be considered evidence? We list only a few which have recently been taken by the police: *Fallen Bastions*, by G. E. R. Gedye; *Barbarians at the Gate*, by Leonard Woolf; *The Town That Was Murdered*, by Ellen Wilkinson (who is a member of the present Government); *The Smaller Democracies*, by Sir Ernest Simon; two NEW STATESMAN & NATION Pamphlets, by G. D. H. Cole, and last, but most wonderful exhibition of the official wisdom, John Stuart Mills' *Principles of Political Economy!*

There seems neither rhyme nor reason in the seizure of such books. In some cases it would seem that the books were seized merely because they were bound in a familiar red binding. Many of them, we hope, are found on the shelves of most, if not of all, Cabinet Ministers. In no case, we suggest, could their possession be evidence for any offence committed, being committed or about to be committed. The power to look for illegal pamphlets exists. The right to seize legal books does not exist. Had we space we could tell long, and in many cases, amusing stories of the examination of citizens and the search of their houses when the only evidence produced against them was that they had at some time or other been members of the Left Book Club, of a pacifist organisation, or even of the Workers' Educational Association, or held some other erroneous opinion. We recall how, in the last war, the present Archbishop of York was interrogated at considerable length about a subversive organisation, with branches in every part of the country, with which he was alleged to have connections. It turned out to be the W.E.A.

In cases in which a police search has not produced any evidence of an offence or of Fifth Column activity, we suggest that the citizen who has been thus examined ought to be given a letter from the Chief Constable, stating that the suspicion which had subjected him to search had proved unfounded. Without such a document the man whose house has been searched becomes the centre of local gossip and has difficulty in defending himself against slander. In every town or village there are foolish people who assume that any police inquiries implies some guilt, even when the result of the inquiry was entirely negative.

There is much evidence that the wide powers of the police have been abused in recent weeks. Members of Parliament and citizens everywhere should not rest under abuses of the law. It is more true in war than at any other time that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance. We must ask who is responsible for these cases. Is it in many cases, as we believe, simply that some Chief Constables have lost their heads? Has any general directive to conduct such searches come from the Home Office or from any other Government organisation? If so, have the police been reminded that actual evidence of an offence is a necessary condition? The Home Office to-day is a much overworked body; new and onerous duties have been placed on its shoulders; the organisation has clearly not stood the strain. We venture to suggest to Sir John Anderson that much reorganisation is necessary and perhaps that an Advisory Committee, similar to that appointed to advise about the treatment of aliens, may be necessary to deal with all this category of Home Office work. On this Committee people should serve who have special knowledge of politics and political parties about which the ordinary police are necessarily ignorant.

A LONDON DIARY

PRIESTLEY was wonderfully good I thought on Sunday night. "Hard work and high jinks" is not a bad motto. He talked of the unnecessary starvation of the arts in wartime. He described a visit to a great factory and made one feel the noise and heat and the nervous strain of working in these conditions. Then he gave an equally effective description of the workers revelling in a concert party after work. He seemed to think that Cabinet Ministers might also gain benefit from some high jinks and offered himself as a red-nosed comedian. He understands the basic truth about this war, that suppression is the way to lose it and encouragement the way to win. He welcomes concert parties on the intellectual level of pantomimes with the same zeal with which he condemned the book tax, which has now been abandoned. He has made an immense new reputation as a broadcaster—in that capacity he is the one great discovery in this war. But he talks about a "people's war." Therefore important people, who are supposed to want to win the war but whose idea of doing so is to sit on everyone's heads, have been trying to bring pressure to bear on the B.B.C. to put a stop to Mr. Priestley. I have heard something of this before. Mr. Priestley has now himself mentioned the efforts to get him off the air in a Sunday paper. I feel sure that his popularity will defeat these defeatists in high places.

Sir Kenneth Lee gives place to Mr. Frank Pick at the Ministry of Information. Sir Kenneth won the reputation of remarkable honesty and disinterestedness. What he seems to have lacked was a grasp of the exceptionally complex and subtle problem of organising a Ministry of Information within a still functioning democracy. Anyway he did not sack nearly enough people. Mr. Frank Pick may well remedy this fault. He has one of the ablest administrative minds in this country and that he does not lack imagination is clear from the whole story of the Undergrounds during the last ten years. He was one of the first people in this country to realise that efficiency need not mean ugliness and that, on the contrary, excellence of design—see the Underground architecture and posters—could be used as a bull point for sales. The problem of organising the M.O.I., however, is different. Trains run where and when they are told; words, in which the M.O.I. chiefly deals, are subtle and elusive creatures. I doubt if Mr. Pick has strong political views or much political knowledge—which usually implies a tendency to the Right. That may not matter if he is aware of the immensely complicated political issues that arise in every action taken by the Ministry. He will aim, I take it, at building up an administrative machine and has presumably demanded a free hand to do so. If he does that he will have succeeded where his predecessors have failed.

* * *

I have had an interesting letter from one of the mothers who travelled with the 135 children evacuated to Canadian and American Universities from Oxford, as the first part of what was intended to be a far larger plan. She writes:

> Our organisers in Oxford were indefatigable in their work to help us all on our way. No effort was spared. The Dean of the Medical School voluntarily accompanied us, and held a daily medical inspection of all unaccompanied children. One of the mothers also acted as nurse of the party day and night throughout the journey. The Dean transacted all our business for us: held all our papers and our passports, and even our money, so that we mothers set off—leaving our husbands, our homes, and our memories—only with a few pieces of silver in our pockets and our children at our sides.
>
> We had a fairly shrewd notion of the emotional strain of so taking our fate in our hands, but none of us had any real picture of what the journey would be like. We all had had our experiences of the shipping offices, and of the oft-repeated tales of the lack of shipping space for private parties' evacuation. But we also had a childlike conception of the concessions on the boat that would be afforded to this scheme.
>
> No special rooms had been allocated to the children, no part of the deck railed off. There was nowhere to air our children's and babies' clothes, much less to iron them. We found the ship being run on ordinary peacetime lines, the children severely kept to the third-class deck although the ship was carrying exactly double its usual numbers. Exactly half the passengers on this boat were adults and half were children under 12. And at this same time we are told that the Government Evacuation Scheme has had to be temporarily abandoned.

I wonder how many of those adults were on business of national importance and how many were simply removing themselves to safety? Surely it should be possible for the Government to commandeer all Transatlantic passenger space and allot it fairly according to need, instead of permitting the wealthy adult to commit self-evacuation.

* * *

An Oxford correspondent writes to me that a friend of his family's was, by a gross blunder, thrust aboard the *Arandora Star* and has since been reported missing. A letter to friends in America alluded with "pardonable bitterness" to the scandal. The letter has now been returned by the censorship department with a printed slip saying that the letter "constitutes a breach of the Defence Regulations. The writer is *warned* to be more careful in the future. N.B. The communication will be allowed to proceed if the passage or passages referring to *criticism of Government war measures* are omitted and if it is posted to the addressee in the usual way." The word "warned" is underlined in red pencil. The words "criticism of Government war measures" are written in in ink. My correspondent comments: "How far is it generally known that the Defence Regulations empowers the Government to impose not only a military censorship (on disclosure of facts likely to assist the enemy) but a Nazi censorship (on criticism of the Government)?"

* * *

I referred last week to the lamentable way in which some local authorities and organisations were dismissing Conscientious Objectors and thus nullifying the work of the Tribunals and the intentions of the Government. I am sorry to see that a borough like Bermondsey (represented in Parliament by Dr. Salter) has sent a questionnaire to every employee, including those above and below military age, to ascertain whether he is an objector to Military Service on conscientious grounds. Fourteen employees (including one 61 years old!) have signed in the affirmative and have been dismissed. I also hear

of Education authorities who have written to heads of schools asking them to report on the private opinions of their staff—a most unpleasant form of espionage. I hope such matters as these will come up among the other issues of liberty which are to be discussed at the Conference organised by the National Council for Civil Liberties on August 24th at the Central Hall, Westminster. The purposes of this Conference is to hear the reports of the delegates who were appointed (at the former Conference on July 21st) to wait upon Mr. Attlee, Sir John Anderson and Mr. Duff Cooper. On August 24th the session at 6.30 will take the form of a public meeting which will be addressed by Percy Collick of the A.S.L.E. and F., Frank Owen, Editor of the *Evening Standard*, L. C. White of the Civil Servants Alliance, and Professor Haldane. I understand that the N.U.R., the Shop Assistants, the North Wales Miners, and the Typographical Association have already appointed delegates to the Delegates Conference in the afternoon. The public may also attend this session.

* * *

I stood looking at the early plum trees. There never was such a year for stone fruit. Soon there will be a big crop of greengages and then the immense plum harvest, none of which, the Ministry of Food has promised us, shall be wasted. But in Essex and in some other counties we have a speciality, the myrobalan or the cherry plum, which has the best flavour of any plum I know and which makes wonderful jam. The loaded trees in the sunlight look as if they were hung with fairy lights. "Tons of them will be waste," said Mr. Thomas, who owns most of the land around us. "Of course plums won't win the war, but every little helps." "Can't you sell them?" I asked. "Sell them? No," he said, "nor give them away. Some are used in local preserving centres, but they cannot get round a quarter of them and people haven't enough sugar to use many of them themselves. They ought to go to the jam factories." I went back to my own garden. We have picked and picked from our one tree and made jam and given them away by the basketful and there are still a few for the wasps and birds to finish off. My neighbour has seven loaded trees and despaired of using them. So I brought up a big boxful to town and offered them to the local greengrocer. He was charging 9d. a pound for them only ten days ago—a prohibitive price to most people: in the country where no one wants to buy plums you could get them for a penny a pound or take them away for nothing. I sold him my little load for 2*d.* a pound and had the satisfaction of substantially reducing the price of cherry plums in Central London—which suggested that an amateur with a lorry could do wonders with the fruit market just now. Cannot the Ministries of Food and Agriculture get together on this whole problem of marketing? I can see that a bumper crop from a single locality presents peculiar difficulties. The real test will be the greengages in a fortnight's time and the big autumn plum crop.

* * *

I heard a loud voice in the village street. It was the first time I had ever heard a loud voice in the village. There are only a dozen houses and a pub. The owner of the voice was an earnest, little man with sandy hair and spectacles. He was asking us all with great energy what would happen to us if we neglected the chance of salvation which Jesus offered to us. Perhaps because there was no very obvious answer, no one came within more than ten yards of him. The soldiers were sitting chatting on the bench outside the pub. It was a lovely evening, mild and comforting, like the beer. "He comes like that once every year," said Mr. Park. "I never saw anyone listen to him." Feeling sorry for him but unable to interrupt the flow of his exhortation to tell him so, I went in for half a pint. There was the usual shove-ha'penny and darts and also an amusement that was new to me. A soldier was standing with outstretched arm on which a man was tattooing a coat of arms with an electric machine. He had both arms done with what appeared to be a regimental crest. It was in two colours, red and blue. The operation looked painful. Apparently you pay 1*s.* for a small tattoo and you can get one as big as your chest or back, if disfigurement for life is really worth 10*s.* to you. Judging from the interest of the audience tattooing is more popular than salvation in our village.

* * *

Here is the most improper comment I have yet received on the Ministry of Information, where 49 persons get over £1,000 a year.

> Though national safety must comment disarm
> It may never be perfectly clear
> Why some get a fortnight for spreading alarm
> While some get a thousand a year.

The sudden death of Professor Eileen Power is so great a loss to those of us who knew her and have worked with her that it is difficult to write anything in the nature of an obituary. I first remember her when at the end of the last war she was a young don at Cambridge—a woman lecturing (it was a novelty then) to men as well as to women students. She was a most remarkable woman—a brilliant historian and teacher who wrote books (her *Medieval People*, for instance) that the unlearned read with gusto and who rose to the top of the academic world without ever losing touch for a moment with a wide circle which included the younger as well as the older literary and artistic lights of our generation. She had successfully gratified her passion for travelling: the Gobi Desert, the Asiatic caravan routes, the adventures of Marco Polo, the culture and life of ancient and modern China, these were some of her most cherished sidelines of interest. Someone must write her biography; the most difficult thing to convey will be her peculiar graciousness, her wit and charm as a hostess and friend, and her endless kindness to students and, above all, her genius for winning the fullest savour from every sort of society, a daily event.

* * *

Statistics are fallible things, but I derive a certain comfort from a friend's calculation that there is one pigeon to every 90 inhabitants of London. After all, as he put it, if 100,000 pigeons so rarely score a direct hit, why should I worry about the Germans? CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Miss E. Younghusband.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

The Mayor of Southend (Alderman W. Miles) stated yesterday during the hearing of cases infringing the black-out regulations that there would be no difference between fines imposed on a poor man or a rich man for such offences.

A defendant after pleading "Guilty" to showing a light asked that his reduced circumstances and his family should be considered when the penalty was assessed.

The Mayor said: "There seems to be a mistaken impression that if people are in humble circumstances the fine should be very much less. That would be so in ordinary circumstances, but we are at war now and the offenders who come before us have not only placed themselves in jeopardy but the whole of their neighbourhood."

The defendant who pleaded poverty paid the same penalty of £3 as that imposed on the manager of the town's biggest hotel.—*Times.*

I have never taken the view that Mr. Coward writes better than Oscar Wilde or even Sheridan, but I have always regarded him as a serious patriot. That was shown when he cultivated the company of some of our most brilliant stars from the Foreign Office and took his daily walk in Whitehall.—Atticus in the *Sunday Times.*

A plainly discernible letter B on the reverse side of leaves of corn is regarded by people in the North of the Island as a good omen for a British victory in the war. This phenomenon last appeared, it is stated, in 1918, when the Allies won the war which had lasted from 1914.—*Isle of Man Times.*

The Secretary of the National Canine Defence League protests against suggestions that dogs should no longer bear the owner's name and address because this information might be useful to enemy parachutists. He gives the following reasons why no parachutist is likely to receive help in this way: the animal would be too intelligent (or particular) to permit a Hun to examine him; the Hun would get bitten, and anyone who stopped to read dog collars would be advertising very clearly that he was up to mischief and would present an excellent target for a well-aimed boot (or rifle).—*Times.*

AN OPEN LETTER TO H. G. WELLS

My dear H.G.,

You have been good enough to send me a copy of your latest Penguin, *The Commonsense of War and Peace*. In your covering letter you particularly draw my attention to the famous Declaration of the Rights of Man and ask me for "a definite statement of my intentions in the matter." Here I confess I am a little at a loss. To my knowledge you have produced three Penguins and one full-sized book since the war began. I have read all the Penguins, though not the book, and each time I have duly registered agreement and admiration, but I am left wondering what service my agreement and my admiration are to the causes we both have at heart. How, for example, do they bear upon the question of "intentions." The trouble with me, as with so many of my generation, is that we take much of what you say so automatically for granted—it is your fault for having so tinted the spectacles through which we look out at the world, that inevitably

we see things in your colours—that it has come to seem to some of us a little trite. But the word "trite" suggests disparagement and the last thing I want to do is to disparage; I don't want even to criticise—yet. Let me rather pay a tribute to the unflagging energy of a man who at the age of—is it really 74?—can still pour his ideas like a perennial fountain into the desert of our intellectual wilderness; and to the irrepressible optimism which, in spite of those disheartened pages in *The Fate of Homo Sapiens*, written in what one now sees to have been a quite unrepresentative phase of discouragement—"Mankind," you will remember, "which began in a cave and behind a windbreak, will end in the diseased-soaked ruins of a slum"—can now express a confident belief that the establishment of a world-wide Federation after the war is not "asking too much of the human intelligence" even "at its present level." And with this quotation I come back to *The Commonsense of War and Peace*. What I understand your book to be saying is this: it is not enough to win; we must consider the kind of world we are to establish after we have won. To that end we must state our peace terms now. If we don't, we shall be betrayed by the politicians and get another Versailles. The foundation of these peace terms must be a common conception of democracy and to this conception you have sought to give point and content by your Provisional Declaration of Rights. We have most of us read the Declaration in the course of the *Daily Herald* discussion and I have nothing fresh to say about the Rights here. I am content to take my hat off to their author.

What else? You have an interesting passage on different types of Federation which you significantly define as "nothing more nor less than an agreement on the part of this or that group of independent powers or organisations to set up a common authority to which they delegate *certain specific functions*." Within the framework of this definition, you distinguish Federations such as that of the United States, affairs of power politics pure and simple imposed upon their constituent states by elementary considerations of survival, *ad hoc* Federations for specific purposes, such as the Postal Union, and what you call "War-welded Federation." It is this last which interests you. In the days before the French collapse a substantial measure of common control had been established between ourselves and the French; if Mr. Churchill's offer of union had been accepted, these common controls would have developed into a single government. This War-welded Federation, you say, must not cease with the war but must establish a Standing Armistice upon which the great neutrals, Russia and America, will also serve. The terms of the Armistice—and here your common conception of democracy comes in—must be stated now. The Standing Armistice will develop into a series of "fully empowered world commissions" to hold down Germany and set the world to rights. Thus there must be a Disarmament Commission, a Reparations Commission, another Commission for the restoration of production, above all an Air Commission, for unless we can put a stop to air warfare, our civilisation is doomed. The Air Commission in its turn will develop into a permanent Air Police. "All that," you say, "we can get out of a properly conditioned *and previously discussed and formulated* Armistice . . . a Nominal Armistice which will be in effect a Peace Union." And having got "all that" we have got the essential conditions of a decent world order after the war.

I have, I hope, fairly summarised your main argument. I know that I have left out the many incidental felicities with which it is embellished, the occasional discursive jets which the fountain throws out by the way. I particularly like your conception of the "downward class war" by which you mean the jealous hostility with which highly placed and eminent people all over the world regard the cheerfully irreverent, newly enfranchised masses, and their naive dismay at the prospect of a world without inferiors to order about. Your interpretation of our refusal to help the Spanish Republic in the light of this conception I found very fruitful, and I particularly enjoyed the well-deserved drubbing that you administer to Dean Inge and Arthur Bryant for their cavalier treatment of the figures of the alleged murders by the Spanish Reds, and their ingenuous—or should it be disingenuous—evasion of your efforts to bring them to book. I agree with you that honesty demanded a public disclaimer and am surprised and pained at the Dean's apparent refusal to disclaim.

And now having performed the highest business of the critic, which is to proclaim your merits as a man and a writer, I am going to indulge my smaller self by a little nagging at your book. The bone I want to nag is of some antiquity. Early in the last war you published, under the name of William Bliss, a work entitled *Boon*. In this book imperfectly disguised as Boon, you play with the idea of a "mind of race," which expressing itself through the more intelligent and impersonal members of our species gradually assumes a kind of consciousness. You thought of it, you will remember, as organising a world conference. That was in 1915, and in the same book a certain Wilkins makes objections, very obvious and to my mind overwhelming objections. But although he convinced me, Wilkins never seems to have convinced his creator. For, ever since, you have been busy reformulating in different ways this notion of yours of groups of intelligent and public-spirited persons, representatives of the mind of humanity *tout court* and generally conceived—God help us!—in the likeness of scientists coming together and salvaging our world. They were doing it in the *Open Conspiracy*. They were doing it disguised as Lord Melchetts in *William Clissold*. They were doing it again, this time under the alias of world airmen, in *The Shape of Things to Come*. Now in the present book they are represented as taking over from the Governments the task of setting up a World Commission, realising the common conception of democracy and establishing a world Federation. For when we come to the chapter "Development of the World Revolution," which purports to tell us how it is all to be done, we find that it can be done without a central government, without even a common leadership; what you look forward to is "*a world-wide coalescence of all the scattered forces of creation and protest in the human heart, into one consciously revolutionary movement based on the declared rights of man*," while as for leadership, the question is dismissed with the caustic comment "an educated community" in an emergency "asks intelligent questions, and after due scrutiny, does the right thing to do." Now this I simply cannot bring myself to swallow. Not only do I profoundly disbelieve in this getting-together of intellectuals all over the world, but I disbelieve even more strongly in their ability to put the world to rights, even if they did get together, and most of all in the willingness of governments to let them. You tell us hopefully that "we could have the best part of the world under international commissions in quite a short time if it wasn't for the inertia of the older politicians. In two or three years at the outside." But that "if it wasn't" gives the game away. How do you propose to get rid of the politicians? What tittle of evidence have you for supposing that intellectuals like you and me and Mr. Y and Mrs. X by getting together and pooling our wits, are going to induce the world to sack its politicians and follow us when all the evidence of our times goes to show *our* impotence and *their* power. . . . Hence this bone that I am nagging seems to boil down to a charge of failing to come to grips with the concrete difficulties of the actual situation in which we find ourselves. You put out ideas, admirable ideas, and then leave it to others to form the organisations which will realise them in fact; as if the establishment of the necessary organisation to effect the world revolution could be taken, as it were, in one's stride.

Like many others, I receive letters from America. Some weeks ago there came a letter, chiding me for writing lengthy and tedious books about the problems of our time and their solution. Such books, it was intimated, were now superfluous, for, says the writer, I have recently made a discovery which will enable all the problems of civilisation immediately to be solved. The discovery is very simple; it is that men should learn to love one another. Always polite to correspondents, I replied thanking the writer for his discovery and asking him how he proposed that it should be applied. To this, he answered that for his part he considered that it was enough to have made the discovery. Its application he proposed to leave to lesser men.

Yours with gratitude and respect,

C. E. M. JOAD

SHABBY HAT

SIR KINGSLEY WOOD, in an appeal for economy, suggests that the time is approaching when a shabby hat will be regarded as the badge of a true patriot. "There's a bouquet for you," said a friend to me as the message reached us from the wireless set. I did not take it as a bouquet, however, since, so far as my experience goes, the shabbiness of one's hat bears little relation to one's expenditure. There are men who can keep a hat for years looking as new almost as on the day on which it was bought. There are others—of whom I am one—whose hats, even after a week's wear, begin to look as though they had been left out in the rain in the Lake District, blown about the London streets in a gale, sat on in railway-carriages, and even played football with by evacuated schoolchildren. I have long been convinced that a man can no more control the condition of his hat than the colour of his eyes. The hat quickly adapts itself to his character, and tells you as much about him as his walk. The very tilt of it can express

vanity, decorousness, or daring. "*Le chapeau, c'est l'homme même.*"

Realising this, I have never been proud of my shabby hat. Other shabby-hat wearers, on the contrary, are. Many years ago, I met an Australian artist who, as we took down our hats after an evening at a dining-club, looked enviously at me and said: "Well, I never thought I should meet a man with a hat even more disreputable than my own." As this was intended for a compliment, I naturally felt flattered; but, if I had been honest, I should have assured him that whereas he obviously cultivated disreputability of hats, disreputability of hats had been thrust upon me by Nature. This must be so, since one day, after I had been wearing a perfectly ordinary hat for some time, a stranger came up to me and said: "Excuse me, sir, but would you mind telling me where you got that hat? I have been looking for one like it in every shop in London. You see, I have to play a part in a new play at His Majesty's, and a hat like that is absolutely necessary for the character I'm acting." I might have told him to buy any hat that fitted me and let me wear it for a week and that I could guarantee that it would assume the required character. But, pleased with the thought of my hat's appearing on so distinguished a stage as Tree's theatre, I asked him for his address and undertook to post the hat to him that evening. I afterwards went to see the play, and to my quasi-parental eyes the hat seemed the star performance of the occasion. I have experienced many thrills in the theatre, but few more exquisite than I experienced when my hat made its first entrance from the wings.

Whether a bowler ever conforms to the character of the wearer in the same way as a crush-hat, I am uncertain. I have never worn a bowler except as a small church-going boy, and I hated it as I hated all Sunday clothes. Perhaps, if I had worn it regularly, it might gradually have come to seem fit company for a human skull. As it was, its rigidity, its cramping hardness, made it to me a symbol of slavery. Yet I have seen men looking quite happy in bowler hats. It is possible that it is somehow in spiritual accord with the life of a man of regular habits.

As for the top-hat, I never wore one in those days; but I disliked the thought of ever having to wear one. My detestation of it did not go so far as that of the Victorian evangelist who, on seeing a man in a tall hat coming into a revival meeting at which the audience belonged mainly to the working class, called out: "God does not want the man in the tall hat," and assured his hearers that the man in a cloth cap was the real favourite of Providence. A great Irish poet even declared that a man who wears a tall hat has lost his soul. My own objection to the tall hat was due to my belief that it must be extremely uncomfortable; and I was confirmed in this opinion when, having to attend a wedding, I borrowed a tall hat that did not fit me, along with morning dress that did not fit me, and found it almost impossible to keep the hat balanced on my head. In later life, however, I was impelled to buy a top hat for another ceremony and to my surprise I discovered that, being light and airy, it is the most comfortable of all hats. If I had the courage, I would wear that hat every day. When I think of it reposing in its lonely box I sometimes sigh for the return of my early years in London, when even journalists went about in top-hats. Three of the reporters on the *Manchester Guardian* wore tall hats when I was in Manchester for a short time at the turn of the century.

In a Fleet Street barber's in those days when you went in for a shave about noon, a special attendant stood at the entrance whose business it was to iron the hats of the customers while they were being shaved. What an impressive procession they made as they passed in and out in hats that shone like symbols of eternal prosperity! How I should have envied them if I had known that wearing a tall hat was not only a conventional duty but a pleasure! Yet the fact that a tall hat has to be so constantly brushed and ironed suggests that it is not everybody's hat—that it is a hat requiring far more care than some of us are inclined to give a hat—that, indeed, if some of us took to wearing it, it would in a short time become as disreputable a mockery of its original self as the hats we at present wear.

Still, if Sir Kingsley Wood wants economy, I think it would be a good thing for him to urge us to fetch all those top hats of ours out of their boxes and to make full use of them in the national interest. We should not need to brush and iron them, since, according to Sir Kingsley's view, the shabbier the hat the better. We should gradually come to look askance at any man wearing a tall hat with the nap brushed the right way. We should compete with each other as to who had the best right to the title of Shabby Hat Number One. This, I am sure, would add immensely to the picturesqueness of the London streets, for, whatever may be said in favour of tidiness, there can be no doubt that there is immensely more individuality in a shabby tall hat than in a well-groomed tall hat. The most picturesque tall hats I have ever seen have been on the heads of drivers of four-wheeled cabs and Irish peasants.

As for shabbiness in general, I wonder whether it is safe to make it popular. After all, tidiness was one of the few forms of discipline left after the collapse of Victorianism. Tidiness for a time became a ruling passion that swept through all classes. Even the increased use of cosmetics may be attributed to this passion. Children, again, have probably looked tidier in recent years than at any previous time in history. Hiking, it is true, with its strange costumes, has done something to stem the tide of national neatness. Shirts open at the neck and shorts that would disgrace a football field have become the uniform of a great army of fanatics for the open air. At the present moment, I suspect, there is a great secret battle going on in the soul of England between the forces of shabbiness and the forces of tidiness. And now Sir Kingsley Wood throws his whole weight on to the side of shabbiness.

If this sort of thing goes on, we may soon have children boasting of wearing stockings with holes in them and others proclaiming proudly that their shoes leak. Many of them, no doubt, will be glad to economise in soap and to save hairbrushes by not using them. It is always possible to save fuel by not taking a bath, and to save clothes by lying in bed all day, as a number of citizens could afford to do. It seems to me therefore that some limit should be set to the craze for saving, or, at least, that some limit should be set to the movement for greater shabbiness.

No one, for example, would like to see everybody living in the shabby circumstances in which some misers have lived. The miser is undoubtedly an economist, but in his striving for economy he forgets the ancient principle, "Nothing too much." I once knew a rich miser who saved not only his own clothes but the garments of his dead wife, and who went about wearing an extraordinary mixture of male and female garments, all ragged. His boots were so full of holes that poor people who did not know him sometimes stopped him, and mistaking him for a beggar, offered him a cast-off pair from their own homes. He always accepted the gift. If a history of misers were written, it would be crowded with such figures—demons, rather than heroes, of saving and shabbiness.

It is true that Sir Kingsley Wood's Man in the Shabby Hat, unlike the miser, does not save for himself, but for his country. His saving is a form of generosity; his untidiness a form of unselfishness. If he loves being spick-and-span, his sacrifice is all the greater. If, hating frayed collars, he wears frayed collars, he will almost have qualified as a martyr. Such men command our respect, but, even so, my experience of hats tells me that, just as it is possible to spend money and be shabby, so it is possible to save money without shabbiness. The tidy-souled man will go on being tidy, however old his garments. One of the tidiest men I ever knew earned less than a pound a week. It was his ambition to look like an aristocrat, and, judging him by his clothes, you might certainly have thought that he had a valet to look after him. He was the sort of man who presses his trousers under the mattress every night. I doubt whether any hat of his could ever have become shabby, however long he had worn it. If he had been living to-day, he would not have looked like a patriot, but he would have been one. And he would certainly have hated the notion of looking like one.

Y. Y.

WHAT DOES A MAN NEED?

"WHATEVER our political views, we all share in the responsibility of running this country, and most of us would like to see it run co-operatively in such a way that no one enjoyed a luxury while anyone else was going short of a necessity. Wartime gives us an opportunity to redistribute wealth, whether we like it or not. If we use our wits we can arrange that distribution so that the children of the country, at least, profit by this crisis in our affairs. That would be a lasting satisfaction well worth achieving." This is a quotation, not from a propagandist pamphlet of the Fabian Society or the Communist Party, but from a booklet issued by *The Lancet*, a recognised exponent of orthodox medical opinion in this country. *E pur si muove!*

When this war is over most of the readers of this article will be, in the current jargon, very much poorer than they were last year. It seems a good time to contemplate our scale of values. The national economy is in the melting pot. Nobody knows what his real purchasing power is; still less does he know what it will be in 1942. Let us have the courage to turn out the old cupboards and lofts in our minds and sort out the junk—we shall find plenty of it; let us have the courage to go back to our eighteen-year-old convictions. What's the matter

with that old formula: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need"? That is the economic ideal we should keep before us, no matter whether attainable next year, or in twenty years time. Thought is moving in this way even in those strata of society which the conventionally unorthodox have been wont to regard as embarnacled.

The doctors have, for many years, been subject to attacks from the left wing of our political critics on grounds often unfair, but equally often well-founded. But, in the last few years, some of the most effective blows on our socio-economic system have been delivered by the orthodox medical profession. The British Medical Association, both collectively and by the individual pens and voices of some of its most prominent members, has brought to the notice of the public the nutritional deterioration in which our economic system is involving a very large section of our people. And now *The Lancet*, having, for the time being, moved its editorial offices to Aylesbury, comes out with this threepenny "Aylesbury Broadside," of thirty-two pages, on "Family Allowances," blazoning on its cover the slogan CHILDREN MUST BE FED, a fact that many of our elected representatives seem to have forgotten. It is a first-rate pamphlet, full of easily digestible meat. I would advise everyone at all interested in the continuance of our race to buy this little book. It is very readable, yet so concise that to give a fair idea of its contents one would have to reprint the whole. Any reader who is not moved by the true-to-life description of the average mother in the family of a wage-earner, given on the three middle pages of this booklet, will have wasted his threepence. Crudely summarised, *The Lancet's* plea is for the endowment out of national funds of every mother in the country to the tune of five shillings a week in respect of each of her children. "From the medical standpoint, schemes which cover all children at a flat rate are to be preferred to schemes which distinguish either between children in different grades of society or between children in different positions in the family. If 5*s*. will feed a child in Stepney it will feed a child in Kensington, and if the first child in a family needs 5*s*. the third ought not to be expected to manage on 3*s*. In our view, that is the defect of the scale of allowances to soldiers' children and the new scale for the unemployed. The idea of a reduction on having a quantity seems to us to be fallacious. . . . If the scale is to be graded, a rising scale, increasing the rate for each succeeding child, is much to be preferred to a falling scale. If any child is to be omitted it should be the first."

The fact that children have to be fed and clothed is to some extent recognised in our Unemployment Benefit scheme, though not in our Health Insurance scheme. In a roundabout way, it operates in trade-union wage bargains. With a very little pressure of the right sort, I am sure that we could secure the adoption of something like *The Lancet's* scheme within a month or two. It would be worth securing.

It is true that what is called the standard of living has, in the course of the present century, risen greatly in all classes of society. There is no comparing the standard of life of an agricultural labourer in the Somersetshire village in which I spent my youth during the 1870's and 80's, with his thirteen to sixteen shillings a week and little meat except a bit of boiled bacon on Sundays, with that of the farm labourer of to-day with his forty-eight shillings a week minimum wage and his two pounds a week when he happens to be unemployed, even though the rent of his cottage has risen from a shilling or eighteenpence a week to six or seven shillings. He can afford his wireless set, his bicycle, and something like adequate dietary for himself and his family. He, at any rate, is getting somewhere near the standard of what a man needs on the purely material plane. Given a proper system of free education, free doctoring, adequate sickness and unemployment benefits, decent old-age pensions, and a sufficiency of healthy houses, each with a quarter of an acre of garden attached to it, the rent limited to three or four per cent. of cost of erection, the economic problem for the overwhelming majority of the people of this country would seem to be almost solved.

All this is within our power; and, unless we are beaten in this war, will still be in our power when the war is over. We are two-thirds or the way to achieving this result already. Isn't this a good time to complete it?

Our executive has been given authority to do whatever it thinks necessary with the labour power and the purchasing power of every citizen in this country. Never was greater scope offered—on the material plane, anyway—to constructive idealists. Meat and butter and sugar and tea are rationed. Why not purchasing power, also? Is not this the time to secure a minimum standard of purchasing power for every man, woman and child in the country? Then, at least, we should have taken the first step towards the realisation of the ideal which the French have, for a hundred years, been credulous enough to think they had realised. "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"—it is a wry smile which those words provoke to-day. Let us make these terms expressive of our war aims, and let us mean them. Let us recognise the right of everyone to a sufficiency of food, clothing and housing to satisfy hygienic needs; to adequate educational opportunity; to access to medical knowledge and skill in proportion to his need; to freedom to think and to express his thoughts; and to a reasonable minimum of amenities contributory to a decent human life. In return, it is but equitable to demand service in proportion to capacity to render it. I do not think there will be much difficulty in getting it from nearly all. Surplus luxuries we need not worry about; they can be gambled for or scrambled for by those who think they are worth the effort.

HARRY ROBERTS

DEAD DAFFODILS

(After Robert Herrick)

"Mr. Churchill is the leader of the nation; his late opponents survive only under the shadow of his wing."—Lady Violet Bonham Carter, *John o' London's Weekly*, August 9th.

Dead daffodils, we weep to see
You hang about so late,
The rising sun with radiance strong
Reveals your Shrivelled state.
Go, go,
You make a dismal show,
So long
You have outstayed your hour;
No daffodil can hope to be
An everlasting flower.

Since you, alas, were bedded in
All things have gone amiss
You cannot endlessly proceed
Through metamorphosis,
Some waste
Twice used, may in the trough be placed
For feed,
But having bloomed in vain,
You are but destined for the bin
Ne'er to be salved again.

SAGITTARIUS

THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS

[This "true story" of an internment camp reaches us from an "enemy alien" who seems to know Lewis Carroll better than most Englishmen. The skit in its original form contained many local allusions. We should explain that "letter-paper" is official notepaper on which two letters a week may be written, but that for some time no such paper was available, that a Streetfather is the elected representative of the inmates of a street of internees, that a Red Colonel is an inspecting Colonel from the War Office wearing a red band, and that "runners" are young lads used as messengers by officers.]

AND Alice walked on through the mud until she came to the little gate. Near the gate there was a barbed wire, and behind the barbed wire there was another gate, behind the gate there was another barbed wire, and behind the wire there stood the Anglo-Saxon officer.

"Who are you?" asked the officer in a stern voice.

"I'm Alice."

"How old are you?"

"Ten years exactly," said Alice.

"Then you can't be here, because you're under 16."

"Yes, I know," said Alice brightly, "that's why I came to ask you about my release."

"But you can't be released if you're not here, and I've already told you you can't be here because you're under 16."

"Can I wait here, then?"

"No, no one in this camp may sit on a fence. Anyway, if you live here why did you go out?"

"I went to find the post office to buy stamps," said Alice meekly.

"Why didn't you use our post office?" snapped the officer.

"I'm sorry, Sir," said Alice, who wanted to be very polite because she was a "C" case, "but I couldn't find it among the many tents. Could you please show me where it is?"

"It will be there to-morrow. In any case, why do you want stamps?"

"I wanted to write home."

"Then have another letter-paper."

"But I haven't had one yet to-day," said Alice.

"Then you can't have another," replied the officer, "but I'll let you have one as a hardship case."

"What is a hardship case?" asked Alice with interest.

"A hardship case is anyone who is not registered as a non-hardship case. We have 3,000 people here and 8,000 cases, so when we made our last roll-call we counted 6,005 people. We deducted their ages and that is how we discovered that there were 10 officers too many."

"That must have been very awkward," said Alice, sympathetically.

"Oh, not at all, not at all. They had only been sent here by mistake and were all interned."

Alice thanked the officer for the letter-paper and returned to the second camp. At the cross-roads there sat a man crying. Alice was very touched by the sight, and led him gently away to his office. There, after drying his eyes on a couple of house lists, he started to tell his story. "Once upon a time," said the Streetfather, "I was a real father." At that moment there was a commotion in the street. "Oh, there comes the Red Colonel on his tour of inspection," exclaimed the Streetfather. "I must call a meeting at once. Excuse me."

Alice followed him into the street, and there was the Red Colonel coming down the road saying he would have everybody interned, and the runners were putting down many names on their lists. Suddenly the Red Colonel stopped in front of a house for special inspection.

"Why isn't your house blacked out?" he asked the anxious Housefather.

The Housefather wanted to say something about daylight and people coming in and out, but he was interned and made a Streetfather as a punishment.

By this time Alice was very hungry, so when she came to a building with a large notice: CANTEEN—CLOSED FOR THE DURATION, she climbed in through the window and there behind the counter was the Sheep. "Good morning," said the Sheep. "What do you want to buy?"

"I would like some chocolate, please," said Alice.

"We haven't any."

"Well have you any cheese, then?"

"No, not to-day. You see we only sell for cash, but as no one here has any cash, we can't buy."*

"Then why do you call it a canteen?" Alice said, rather annoyed.

"Didn't you read that it is closed?" retorted the Sheep, indignantly.

So Alice went out again and came to a window with a notice up saying that those needing further instructions should go in on odd days. Alice wasn't sure what day it was, but she took her chance, and there she found Humpty Dumpty. He didn't give Alice time to ask him anything, but at once wanted to know whether she had passed her matric. "I shall in due course," said Alice, feeling very grown-up. "Well, we'll see if you can do addiction and detraction. When does 600 — 200 = 800?" "That's an easy one. At the roll-call, of course."

"Well, now let me test your powers of observation. The other day I saw a row of beds in front of a house. What do you think it was?"

"A hospital," replied Alice promptly.

"That was right," said Humpty Dumpty. "But tell me this: what is a parcel?" Alice shook her head. "Why it's the Greek for an empty shell," said Humpty Dumpty contemptuously. "And the moral of this is: Don't send telegrams unless you have wires to pull." He yawned and then asked Alice whether she would like to learn Spanish.

"No, I don't want to go to Canada," she said firmly. "And I suppose there is no moral in this."

"Only moral compulsion, child. And the moral is: Don't buy your ticket before they take you for a ride. By the way, do you happen to know what a Security Officer is?"

Alice thought she might as well have a guess at it, so she said "That must be the gentleman who is looking after the Fifth Column."

"And the moral of this," went on Humpty Dumpty, "is: Clarity begins at home." Then he turned to Alice with one final question before he dismissed her. "Do you like it here?" and without waiting for her answer he concluded "And the moral of this is: Don't get interned."

BY AN ENEMY-ALIEN INTERNEE

* All cash is taken away on entering the camp and only tokens are used. These are distributed at rather irregular intervals.

TWO LANDLADIES

MRS. BROWN and Mrs. Jones both lost their husbands in the late thirties, at a time when saving was impossible as their children's education absorbed their entire incomes. Neither woman has been trained for any profession. Neither husband left any money, apart from modest insurances. Mrs. Brown, aware that competent housekeeping was her sole asset, decided to open a boarding house on the Cornish coast, and spent the insurance money on furnishing bedrooms, since her selected house contained eight more bedrooms than her married home at Sutton. Mrs. Jones chose the Sussex coast. For seven or eight years their experiences were approximately similar. They had to compete with innumerable rival widows, engaged in like enterprises; with the capricious weather of Britain; with the vagaries of national finance; and with incessant staff problems—for in the winter neither of them could support as much domestic help as they needed in the summer; and in the summer servants were inclined to prefer the big licensed hotels, where tips were far more liberal. So both landladies flourished in the summer months, and found themselves running fairly deep into debt towards Easter. Each woman kept her daughter at home rather than train the girl for a profession, partly because the daughter made an excellent maid, who would work unpaid when times were bad; partly because the mother was only able to snatch a few hours' relief from the household duties amidst the terrific work of the season, if she had a dependable assistant to leave in charge. In 1938 the approach of Munich produced a very lean season; comparatively few people felt able to spend a month by the sea, and those who came bargained so fiercely that profits were reduced to a minimum. In 1939 the threat of war curtailed the season to a very few weeks. Then came the war, finding both women in debt to the tune of several hundred pounds. Mrs. Brown discovered to her delighted astonishment that Cornwall had been identified as a city of refuge by all the timider folk of Britain, and throughout the winter of 1939 to 1940 her rooms were packed out. True, her guests were short of money, beat her down on the tariff, grumbled about the rations, were most untrustworthy about observing the black-out, and generally gave her about ten times as much trouble as any peacetime guests had ever done, which is saying a lot. But at least she was sure of a full house for the duration, or until Mussolini annexed Franco's aerodromes, and began to bomb the West of England. Food was also scarcer than anywhere else in Britain, as the Food Controller had not budgeted for the panic exodus to Cornwall, and his allotments were inadequate. Also the problem of staffing brought her to the verge of a nervous breakdown, as men joined up, girls knew they could pick any of a hundred jobs at a moment's notice, and wages soared. But at least she was more than solvent, her debts were paid, and money kept pouring in.

Mrs. Jones' experience was the precise reverse. Her "permanents"—the crotchety old ladies who browbeat insolvent landladies in the lean winter months, and pay two guineas a week for accommodation worth five guineas—promptly disappeared to inland resorts far from gunfire and exploding mines. The people who had booked autumn, spring, and summer rooms wrote to cancel. She dismissed her staff one by one. She and her daughter tremulously accepted every conceivable insult and meanness on the part of the two or three aged viragoes who remained. At last came the tearfully anticipated crisis when the house was empty, and as the coast had been declared a prohibited area, the entry of any further visitors was forbidden by the military. She and her daughter had to live. They owed £500 in rent, in rates, and to tradesmen. She thought of storing her furniture, taking a job as companion, and putting her daughter in the A.T.S. or some other women's war work. But the local furniture repositories were choked with other people's furniture. She could not find the cash to transport her lovely furniture to some safe area, where the warehouses might still have room. As long as the furniture remained in the house, she would be liable for rent and for rates. Her creditors were all pressing her. She had no credit, no money for food. Every tinkle of the doorbell announced a dun who soon developed into a bully. So she and Susie put their heads in the gas oven. As nobody wants to buy furniture under existing conditions, no man may prophesy what will happen to Sea View; for her £1,200-worth of household goods is not worth storage costs or transport costs to her creditors, and would not command even a peppercorn bid at auction.

The name of Mrs. Brown is Legion.

The name of Mrs. Jones is Legion.

Nobody takes the least interest in the thousands of Mrs. Joneses.

B. H. DAVIES

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Johnny Apollo," at the Odeon

Why is it that even a poor gangster film, with the expected revelations and thrills, still appeals? We know by heart the atmosphere of tommy-guns and dress-suits, a piano tinkling a lazy blues, the lassitudes and moments of deadly action, the scenes when the killer sends a wreath to the memory of his "best friend" or rebukes a henchman for being rude to an old woman. How well we know them, yet they can be played through again like a favourite record. Not only the atmosphere, but the faces, the wisecracks, the monosyllabic names, the ironic tableaux come out of a bottom drawer which seems inexhaustible. *Johnny Apollo*, though not so good as its title, dips again in this Hollywood stock. The best moments, in fact, are those which echo or vary past triumphs: this time "the Mick," after shooting a pal, lends a shoulder himself to carry the coffin. Lloyd Nolan embodies admirably the sinister simplicities of the gangster; his friendliness to a newcomer, his brief gestures towards love-making and inscrutable reverie make the ice crack uneasily. Dorothy Lamour, as the moll, is a bewitching show-piece (the first shot directs the eye from the legs upwards), but hints too early and too often at a heart of gold. There are other elements, also from stock: prison cells and escapes, Edward Arnold with a massive suggestion of big business dethroned, Tyrone Power (not so good) as a college boy graduating in crime. Charlie Grapevin gives a brilliant study of a shady, drunken lawyer. The story turns out sentimentally. Yet, though this is not a film to remember, one can enjoy it simply for its whiffs from the American underworld. The gangster rat, with his neurotic necessities, is still—despite G-men and forewords by Edgar G. Hoover—the one romantic figure on the screen whose authenticity we do not question.

Fifth Summer Exhibition, Royal Institute Galleries

The fifth summer exhibition at the Royal Institute Galleries much resembles, one feels tolerably certain, its predecessors. There is a complete absence of *Sturm und Drang* here, and if we visit it in the right frame of mind the journey may be found to be as soothing as turning over the pages of *Cranford*; a perfect escape back into a vanished and secure world, a world tinted by the rosiest ideality, into which the disasters of war have not penetrated. The sensibility here is somewhat spinsterish, and has for the most part a nice exactitude. One seems to see a vista of tranquil and probably leisured lives led by very sincere if not highly imaginative people in quiet backwaters, for the most part voluntarily cut off from the spirit of the age and who have hitherto been sheltered as men and women will not be for many years to come. The exhibition is largely a repository of forgotten painting-conventions; skilful and elaborated water-colours of sun-kissed, ivy-clad cottages carry one back nostalgically to the Royal Academies of the 'eighties. Here and there a "modernist" work rears its head, thereby taking on an air of faintly intrusive impropriety. A nude by Alfred Wolmark strikes a dashing note among the canvases which surround it; and yet it, too, seems curiously reminiscent of the last war in style. One's memory harks back to *Colour* . . . . L. Petley-Jones' *Saint Germain* looks quite remarkably well; and there is no questioning the brilliance of this painter's colour-sense, which would be outstanding anywhere. The influence of Van Gogh is visible, but the sonorous harmonies of cobalt-green and crimson, of acrid green and yellow, seem entirely personal. Miss Eleanor Best is by far the most distinguished of the water-colourists and shows a stylish and sensitive drawing, *Tulips and Cassis*.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, August 17th—

Last two weeks of International Youth Centre, Stratford-on-Avon. Particulars from Miss E. A. Sheldon-Walton, 16 Girton Road, Cambridge.

British Drama League Conference and Summer School, Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon. Till August 24th.

Emergency Conference on Civil Liberty and the Defeat of Fascism. Speakers: F. W. Adams and Michael Foot. Birmingham and Midland Institute, Paradise St., Birmingham, 3.

Third Week of Fabian Summer School, Dartington Hall, 3. Speakers: Kingsley Martin, Charles Madge, Arthur Lewis and Jim Griffiths.

SUNDAY, August 18th—

International Festival of Music, Unity Theatre, 3. And on August 19th at 8.

TUESDAY, August 20th—

Piano Recital by Dorothea Vincent, St. George's Church, Bloomsbury, 12.45.

"Take Back Your Freedom," Neighbourhood.

WEDNESDAY, August 21st—

Edward Ellul: "Some Basic Affinities between French and English Poetry," French Institute, 5. Poetry Recital by Margaret Rawlings, 5.45.

FRIDAY, August 23rd—

Public Meeting of the Socialist Medical Association, "Blood Transfusion Services," Conway Hall, 8.

Correspondence

RAILWAY FARES

SIR,—The second application for an increase in railway fares since the railway agreement was announced last February has been made. The first application was granted without a public hearing (except in the case of London Transport). Higher fares are the direct outcome of this agreement which provided they should be granted to enable additional costs to be covered. In allowing the first increase the then Minister of Transport, Mr. Euan Wallace, did not take into account the increased gross traffics and the consequent reduction in overheads. This was scandalous. To do so would have been no innovation because in the Prices of Goods Act provision is made for taking into account increased or decreased turnover in estimating overheads.

When the financial agreement was announced you published an article of mine which condemned it root and branch. I prophesied higher charges, but I admit the agreement is proving even more ridiculous than I foresaw. This is due to war developments. Current traffic bears no relation to that of pre-war days. Shifts in population, cancellation of holidays, cessation of foreign travel, and above all creation of military or defence areas to which travel is already severely restricted—all have changed both the volume and incidence of railway traffic. The position is rapidly being reached where the bulk of both goods and passenger traffic is directly related to the war effort and in the last resort is being paid for by the State.

This process will continue, and I would like to know what happens if air raids become so frequent and widespread that railway travel except for war purposes is prohibited? What happens if invasion takes place and the railways in certain parts of the country have to close? I do not refer to damage which is covered up to £10 millions by the agreement, but to military requirements. According to the present interpretation of the agreement total costs of pre-war days plus increased costs of materials, labour, etc., must be met, and fares and charges must be raised to meet them. The position might even arise where military and Government traffic would be paying for the total railway costs, and charges would have to be raised to ridiculous heights.

The railway agreement should now be scrapped and the railways taken over by the State, and operated by it. Government traffic would then in effect be carried at cost instead of at the ordinary increased commercial rates. It is no longer a question of rewarding the shareholder because it is very doubtful whether he will in any case get more than the Government guaranteed income of 1935 to 1938. Compensation based on that average of £40 millions would be most generous and probably considered so by most shareholders to-day.

Since the agreement was negotiated there is a new Minister of Transport. Sir John Reith is known to be sympathetic to public ownership and has shown more sense than his predecessor and more consideration for the railway user by calling for a public inquiry into the raising of fares. The agreement can be reconsidered at the end of the year on the initiative of either party to it. Sir John Reith should immediately give notice of so doing, delay decision on the raising of fares and urge upon his Ministerial colleagues the public ownership of the railway companies as a first step towards a National Transport Board. ERNEST DAVIES

51 Glebe Place,
Chelsea, S.W.3.

MR. HOOVER AND THE FOOD BLOCKADE

SIR,—A good deal has happened since I suggested in a letter in your columns that it would be politically wise to ask Mr. Hoover's organisation to repeat, for the countries occupied by the Germans, the service it rendered by feeding Belgium during the last war. Evidence has accumulated that these countries may be facing famine some months hence: on the other hand, no responsible neutral authority suggests that the German population is likely to suffer grave privation. In the meanwhile, a representative of Mr. Hoover is seeking from the British Government leave to pass food ships through our blockade for the benefit of Belgium, Holland, Norway and Poland. From Germany his Commission seeks an undertaking that this food shall not be diverted "to the army or other German uses." France is not mentioned in this scheme.

You asked me to suggest a plan by which abuses might be obviated. The promise for which Mr. Hoover asks is not a sufficient safeguard, because it would leave the Germans free to draw unlimited supplies of home-raised food from these countries. On the other hand, we can hardly expect the Germans to refrain from buying, as they always did in times of peace, any surplus of food available for export that these countries may still be able to raise. It cannot be large. I suggest that this difficulty might be met by the adoption of the following formula:

> Exports of foodstuffs raised in the occupied countries shall bear to their present production a ratio no greater than their total exports of such foodstuffs bore to their average production during the three last years of peace. Home-raised foodstuffs supplied to the army of occupation shall be reckoned as exports. A neutral commission shall supervise the import and distribution of food, and shall issue licences for any permissible export, as hereby defined, of foodstuffs. The Commission shall report monthly to the British Government, which will authorise it to import foodstuffs for the sole use of the populations of these countries, so long as it certifies that these conditions are observed.

This scheme would ensure that Germany could derive no advantage, indirect or direct, from the import into these countries of American food.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

[Reference is made to this letter in our editorial Comments this week.—ED. *N.S.&N.*]

REFUGEES

SIR,—The following extract from a letter I received needs no comment:

There are a lot of people here who have been in Nazi Concentration Camps, and we sent the following letter to several of our English friends:

> In the name of 148 internees who had been placed in German Concentration Camps, we protest in the most solemn manner against our internment. The English Government have made known in their White Paper to the whole world what we have suffered in the Concentration Camps. We were and we are deeply grateful that by this publication our sufferings and our situation have become much better known to the world than before. We feel therefore especially hurt by being interned in this country which, by its generosity, gave us hope for a new life. With greatest intensity we reject the supposition that we could be enemies of this country. All those of us who till to-day bear the visible

signs of the Concentration Camps in Germany have especially to fear the physical and psychological effects of our actual internment. The idea to be kept behind barbed wire by friends who have saved us is almost intolerable to us. Give us back to our children, mothers and wives. Release us.

WALTER HUDD

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

SIR,—May I take up a sentence in your leading article "What faces America" (August 3rd)? You say "the size of the future political unit in the modern world is dictated by the range of bombing planes." That observation I believe to be profoundly true, and I wish I could feel that those on whom it is incumbent to plan for "after the war" had appreciated it and its implications.

As regards "security" for the nations the co-operative or sheriffs' posse system has been tried in the balance and found wanting—and clearly because it was built on the hypothesis that the individual States (or some inter-State) authority would be required to take action to uphold the law *after* it had been violated. Merely as a problem in the abstract, "security," i.e., the elimination of fear is, on the contrary, a matter of prevention, that is to say, police action primarily of a preventive nature. Before the age of the aeroplane international policing action was probably impracticable—a technical impossibility. The logical remedy for the traditional situation of inter-State anarchy is, of course, as French minds have contended ever since the project of a League of Nations was conceived, an international force capable of assuring protection for any and every nation and thus in time inducing the abandonment of the means of national defence. Common sense tells us, however, that—prejudice apart—there are insuperable technical and administrative difficulties to a force of all arms upholding any world order. In the particular case of the air arm, however, the transfer of this formidable arsenal of power (civil aviation must, of course, be included) from competing national authorities to a new central authority *is* something feasible—for the metropolitan sphere of Europe. One lesson we have surely learnt from the events of recent years is that the elimination of war from the scheme of things—and not merely any reducing the risk of the occasions of war—is absolutely urgent for the huddled nations of Europe. It is in Europe that the international anarchy has its basis and origin, it is in Europe that the poisons are brewed. And the question of air power is decisive—it transcends all other issues. Mr. Stanley Baldwin bleating forth his first pathetic utterances on this subject seven or eight years ago did at least see the problem. "All disarmament hangs on the air."

Once again let me affirm what you, Sir, have frequently contended. Within the bounds of Europe and its Mediterranean fringe ("there'll always be a Europe") total abolition of national air forces is not merely desirable, it is a condition of survival for European civilisation and the British Empire. In the present circumstances of gangster rule we are liable to forget how near to political agreement on the necessary conditions for the abolition of national air forces the European nations were in the spring of 1933, and how much of the creative technical work has been done—and lies to hand in the records of the Air Commission of the Disarmament Conference. And not the least item on the credit side is the memorandum submitted on April 10th, 1933, by the delegates of the U.S.A., Canada, Argentine and Japan whereby they undertook to submit their civil aviation to appropriate regulation and supervision provided agreement were reached by the continental countries for the vesting of air control in a European authority.

It should be understood that proposals for marking off in this way the sphere of "Europe" to be a beat for an Air Police Force is contemplated only against a background of an international security system somewhat on the lines of the French plan of November, 1932, with its three concentric circles of "security" liabilities. The sphere of its operation is defined positively by the area over which it can exercise effective guardianship (thus Soviet Russia would remain outside a European scheme, though in close co-operation), and negatively by the range of the air bomber (which means the inclusion of the United Kingdom but not the Dominions).

The *disarmament* aspect of this project is all important. Nothing less than abolition of national air forces will meet the case. With a weapon of such potential destructiveness parity at zero is the only effective policy of peace. Any attempt at mere limitation of relative strengths is like playing spillikins on a powder-barrel. The notion of sky-high frontiers is surely the biggest hoax ever perpetrated on a long-suffering public by experts., c.f., the rule laid down in the Air Convention of 1919 that "every Power has complete and exclusive authority over the air-space above its territory." For, after all, "sovereignty" in all history is essentially a territorial conception. Air transport is indeed, as I see it, the heaven-sent federative link of our generation. In the words of Prince Bibesco, President of the Fédération Aeronatique Internationale "either aviation will kill war or the war from the air will destroy civilisation." There is no alternative.

W. HORSFALL CARTER

Stony Green, Prestwood,
Nr. Great Missenden, Bucks.

FREE FRENCHMEN

SIR,—Critic writes: "I am constantly hearing fresh instances of our total failure even to try to win the support of French soldiers and sailors." This remark, well calculated to create the worst possible impression among French nationals at present in this country, would perhaps be justified if it rested on a more solid foundation of facts. The phrase "total failure even to try" is, to put it mildly, a misrepresentation. Yet facts are available to all.

Here is one instance of "total failure." French sailors in Plymouth are given two weekly talks, organised by the W.E.A. in conjunction with the much criticised Ministry of Information. (I admit that no King of France introduces the speakers, but my unfortunate country did not have a monarch to export.) Classes have been arranged, and lessons in English are given regularly. Until recently a daily news bulletin in French was telephoned from London and immediately taken round to the barracks, so that those whom their duties prevented from listening to the B.B.C. French service might be kept informed of developments. I believe the Ministry of Information was also responsible for this feature. Every facility was given to the sailors to get into touch with residents in the city who entertain them generously. I have had the privilege of talking to some of these sailors. They gave me the impression of being as happy as they could be expected to be in these unhappy circumstances. They characterised the British (including, presumably, the authorities) as "de braves types." It is of course possible that the sailors in Plymouth are given special treatment.

Critic, who is "constantly hearing fresh instances," etc., perhaps suffers from intermittent deafness. Well, "*il n'est pire sourd que celui qui ne veut pas entendre.*"

ANDRÉ CLASSE

155, Magdalen Road, Exeter.

[Critic writes: "I am delighted to hear that so much is now being done at Plymouth. I only wish that in the first days after the French collapse contact had been established along the lines I suggested. I know that the British Consul is also doing good work, but the contrast still holds between our success in uniting the whole Norwegian navy and the small number of French sailors who remain in England."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

COMMUNISTS AND THE FRENCH COLLAPSE

SIR,—I was concerned only with the Chamberlain-Daladier policy in reference to France and its collapse. Mr. Gollancz falsely extends it to Britain in detail, and concludes that I hold "it is irrelevant whether or not the Nazis conquer Britain." The Gollancz of a year ago would not have written such nonsense. I repudiate it. Everyone will fight a Nazi conquest, including myself, in so far as the Government by its policy will allow him to do so.

There are two distinct ways offered. First, the way shown by the Spanish Republic, of *increasing* democratic organisation in which the forces of the people are mobilised through the widest possible extension of rights and liberties, through the organisations of the working class, and through socialised industry. The anti-Nazi, anti-Fascist object in view is thereby reflected through the methods adopted. Secondly, the way shown by Italy, Germany, and the French Government, through the rapid advance of monopoly capitalism whether private or through the State, the suppression of democratic rights, the imprisonment of anti-Nazis and anti-Fascists, the control of the trade unions and of the press. This has led in each case directly to Fascism.

At the present stage in Britain—as it was in France—the second method is ineffective even for its avowed purpose, since it leaves trade secrets to play their part in the struggle for monopoly, scorns the fullest use of science, since not efficiency but profit is the criterion applied in war production, and refuses the help of foreign anti-Nazi and anti-Fascist specialists.

The history of the controlling personalities in the present Government during the past critical few years, their social, industrial and financial affiliations, and the slump in democratic freedom since the outbreak of war suffice to show that it is the second method that is being adopted here. So it was in France: hence the actions of the Communists there. Mr. Gollancz may protest that he wants the first, but his writings and his criticisms appear to me to support the second. Chamberlain also protested that he wanted peace, but he got war. It is precisely because I am profoundly concerned about the overrunning of this country by Nazis and Fascists that I support the first.

H. LEVY

A DANGEROUS DECISION

SIR,—I refer to the article headed "A Dangerous Decision" in your last issue.

I agree with your contributor's general thesis that the Courts are a bulwark for the preservation of existing property rights. I consider, however, that he does not accurately state the legal issues involved in this decision, nor does he fairly state the reasoning contained in Mr. Justice Bennetts judgment.

Briefly, the Emergency Powers Defence Act 1939 provided that Regulations might be made authorising the taking of possession *or* control of any property or undertaking. Regulation 55 (5) of the Defence (General) Regulations 1939 is binding only in so far as it is made in pursuance of the above authority. This regulation gives a competent authority power *inter alia* to "carry on the whole or any part" of any existing undertaking.

The judgment given was based on the fact that the regulation purported to authorise the competent authority to "carry on" the business, while the Act from which the regulation must derive any authority it had, only authorised a regulation to be made by which "possession or control" of the business could be taken. The basis of the decision was that Regulation 55 (5) of the Defence Regulation was *ultra vires*.

Your contributor, however, completely ignores the fact that the injunction against the Ministry of Supply's nominees was on the ground that they were acting under regulations which were held to have no statutory authority.

He says "Practically, this injunction means that no power taken under this Act is valid unless the Minister can convince the Courts that it has been 'reasonably' taken; and Mr. Justice Bennett's view of 'reasonableness' seems to be that it must not threaten the interest an owner has in the preservation of his property."

Whereas if your contributor will refer to the last paragraph of Mr. Justice Bennett's judgment in this case as reported in the All England Law Reports Vol. 3 at page 613 he will read that the learned judge actually said "There is only one more thing I wish to say, and that is upon whether or not, if one assumes that the regulation is valid, the reasonableness of the competent authority in acting under it can be questioned in a court of law. For the reasons which were stated by Atkin, J. in Lipton Ltd. v. Ford at p. 654, it seems to me that, since the good faith of the authority is not in question, this Court cannot inquire into that question, which, however, does not really arise in this case, in view of the opinion which I have previously expressed that the rule itself is *ultra vires*."

H. LLOYD BUNCE

12 Cheriton Place, Folkestone.

CENSORSHIP

SIR,—I have just received a letter from an English friend in which the following sentence occurs:

> I think the morale of the English is very sound and solid, though I think, magnificent as Mr. Churchill is himself, he might well introduce into his government some other and stronger ********** he still retains.

The stars represent a piece clipped out of the letter by Examiner ≠ X.

As an American I naturally want England to win the war, and I am wondering if it would not help if

some of these examiners could be assigned to manual labour requiring no brains. W. P. LADD (Dean)
Deanery of the
Berkeley Divinity School,
New Haven, Connecticut.

CASUAL WARDS

SIR,—I see in to-day's NEW STATESMAN AND NATION an allusion to what the writer calls (like nearly everybody else) tramps in casual wards. Like most writers on this subject he knows nothing and can't take the trouble to find out first. In the first place, these infernal places are *not* at convenient distances. They are usually twenty odd miles apart which on a diet of 6 oz. bread, margarine and *tea?* (morning 6 a.m. and evening 6 p.m.) with what they still have the colossal impudence to call a nourishing midday meal—8 oz. bread, 2 oz. cheese and some muck called brawn (2 oz.) is no joke to walk. The allusion to facilities for a Fifth Column is simply putrid. Seventy-five to 80 per cent. are ex-Service and useful to farmers in the seasons. In London they consist of about 30 per cent. small pensioners, so inadequate that they can't live on it and therefore forced into the spike, and the other *travellers*: not tramps. As regards the police having no powers of action *re* identity cards—I've seen fellows *trying* to obtain admission without a card or gas mask and told to go and get one, else no admission. A. SHAYLER
East Street, Tollesbury,
Maldon, Essex.

NORTHERN IRELAND

SIR,—Notwithstanding the fact that Ulster is loyally standing alongside the rest of the United Kingdom in the war effort and has already lost many of her best sons on sea, on land and in the air, there are people, like Mr. John Hawkins, who, remarkably enough, delight in making unfounded and unworthy statements and insinuations against her.

To suggest, in the familiar fashion of anti-Ulster propagandists, that the Ulster Home Guard is a sectarian force is a falsehood, for the simple reason that the force contains Roman Catholics and Protestants, and it is equally false to say that the procedure of attaching it to the Special Constabulary and Royal Ulster Constabulary "aroused considerable opposition from all sections of opinion." The only people who objected to that procedure were a small minority in Ulster who are anxious to help Hitler by forcing Ulster into a neutral all-Ireland, and thus clearing the way for an invasion of Great Britain from a helpless sit-on-the-fence Irish Republic.

May I ask this plain question? If the Ulster Home Guard is a purely sectarian force why are Roman Catholics permitted to join it? Presumably we shall in due course be told that it is sectarian because it contains no Plymouth Brethren or Christian Scientists!

Then there is the matter of Ulster finances. Mr. Hawkins trots out the hackneyed suggestion that Ulster is not paying our United Kingdom Exchequer as much as it should do. The fact is that since 1921 we have paid £29,000,000 into that Exchequer, and this year a further sum of £6,000,000 is being handed over. But the proof of our loyalty to King and Commonwealth is not so much in the amount of money we give to Great Britain. It is rather to be found in the hundreds of our Ulster volunteers who have sacrificed their lives and limbs for Britain in the present war against Nazi aggression.

Finally, if Mr. Hawkins and others of your correspondents from time to time think that by making grossly unfair attacks on Ulster they are helping towards friendship, a better understanding and a united Irish Republic, they are sadly mistaken. Attacks on us only serve to harden us and make us more determined than ever to maintain our British citizenship and to remain part of Britain.

House of Commons. JAMES LITTLE,
M.P. for Co. Down.

WILL HUNGER WIN THE WAR?

SIR,—To the criticism of my above quoted article by Mr. C. S. Berger, will you kindly permit me to make a few remarks which are of general interest. If Mr. Berger had been right in his assertion that: "Nobody doubts Germany's ability to provide adequate food supplies for her population during the winter, according to her present standards" it would not have been necessary to write my article, but I do not suppose that nobody believes what he reads in the newspapers. Will you allow me to quote from the *Times* of June 20th: "... It is considered in some quarters that in four months his (Hitlers) own country will be facing famine."

I do not know what foundation Mr. B. has for his statement: "that in peacetime Europe imports 50 per cent. of her corn." 1936 was the last year before the Nazis started importing corn as a precaution against the outbreak of war. In this year the import covered about 5 per cent. of the corn supply for the whole territory dominated, or encircled by Hitler at present. On an average, the percentage for the years 1936–38 was 7 per cent.

I want to quote here one sentence by Mr. Berger, referring to Holland and Denmark, because with it I agree: "Though exports to Germany may be maintained, or increased, to the rest of Europe they must fall heavily." The rest of Europe concerned is in the case of Denmark—Great Britain. Denmark delivered to Germany in 1939 provisions worth 281 million Kroner, while food exports to Great Britain were worth 792 million Kroner. I admit that, unfortunately, these exports will diminish heavily. But that will not hurt the continent.

I also agree that hunger "nevertheless is a factor likely to help considerably toward winning the war." And I should even add that to make hunger effective we have also to destroy the preparedness to endure it.

YOUR CORRESPONDENT

"FIFTH COLUMN"

SIR,—Mr. Clive Bell, with his accustomed common sense, has sent a whiff of fresh air into the closed columns of your journal. The crusading spirit is always dangerous for those engaged in warfare; (the Children's Crusade, for instance, romantic and beautiful though it was in conception, proved no conspicuous success. And we are all descended from those "Fifth Columnist" children who did not take part in it).

In your reference to Mr. Clive Bell's letter, you quote with approval Mr. Bevin's remark in a recent speech, to the effect that the working classes have produced no "Fifth Columnists." I heard him deliver this speech, in so many respects a magnificent display of patriotism, but was surprised that no one contradicted this amazing piece of effrontery. To take one instance, the French Army Corps which gave way and allowed the Germans to invade France, is known to have been animated by a spirit of treason and can hardly have been composed entirely of aristocrats and millionaires. Moreover, it was the Popular Front and not Generals Pétain and Weygand, who reduced the working hours of Frenchmen to six hours a day at the very moment when the Nazi Government had increased the hours of German workmen to sixteen and so made the French collapse inevitable.

Laws that apply to the Left should apply to the Right equally. If Captain Ramsay or Sir Oswald Mosley had been Socialists, what an outcry would have arisen in your paper at their continued detention without trial! At present rumour busies itself with their names and a thousand crimes are attributed to them. If they are guilty of treason, there is a remedy for it and it should be applied. Meanwhile in the interests of democracy and free speech, in the interests of the Left as well as of the Right, I venture to suggest that we should at least be allowed to know what charge or charges are levelled against them and that they should be brought to trial as speedily as possible.

I need not here plead for the various eminent aliens at present detained for no reason and whose services would be of such inestimable benefit to our country; *their* cause, I know, will be safe in your hands. OSBERT SITWELL
2 Carlyle Square, S.W.3.

SUNDAY IN RUSSIA

SIR,—The London Diary refers to a skilled engineer who "is convinced that we should not try to emulate the U.S.S.R. by abolishing Sunday and substituting a staggered rest day once a week."

Actually, the maximum working week in the U.S.S.R. is 48 hours, and Sunday is a Day of Rest. If Christian Britain followed this example we might really be on the way towards a People's Government.

8 Red Lion Square, W.C.1. PAT SLOAN

[Critic writes: "I forgot that the U.S.S.R. had reverted to the Christian practice. May I add that there was nothing damaging to the U.S.S.R. in saying that they had substituted (as they did for a period) a staggered rest day for a universal Sunday?"—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

The Hogarth Press

has just published
a book everyone is reading

★ROGER FRY: a biography by Virginia Woolf (12s. 6d.). E. M. Forster said last week in these pages that: "her accurate account of her friend's life, her careful analysis of his opinions, have as their overtone a noble and convincing defence of civilisation." Desmond MacCarthy in *The Sunday Times* called it "not only a delightful but an important book," and *The Star* added that it was "a book which would be welcome in any year, but is doubly so just now." The praise from distinguished art critics has been equally impressive: Herbert Read in the *Spectator* said that Mrs. Woolf was Fry's "only perfect biographer," and maintained that she had converted her very complex material into "the organic shape of a work of art." The second impression is now printing.

Do not forget

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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

SINCE Charles Reade's books are published in cheap editions one can assume that he still has his following, but it is unusual to meet anyone who has voluntarily read him. In most people his name seems to evoke, at most, a vague memory of "doing" *The Cloister and the Hearth* as a school holiday task. It is his bad luck to be remembered by this particular book, rather as Mark Twain, thanks to the films, is chiefly remembered by *A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court*. Reade wrote several dull books, and *The Cloister and the Hearth* is one of them. But he also wrote three novels which I personally would back to outlive the entire works of Meredith and George Eliot, besides some brilliant long-short stories such as *A Jack of All Trades* and *The Autobiography of a Thief*.

What is the attraction of Reade? At bottom it is the same charm as one finds in R. Austin Freeman's detective-stories or Lieutenant-Commander Gould's collections of curiosities—the charm of useless knowledge. Reade was a man of what one might call penny-encyclopaedic learning. He possessed vast stocks of disconnected information which a lively narrative gift allowed him to cram into books which would at any rate pass as novels. If you have the sort of mind that takes a pleasure in dates, lists, catalogues, concrete details, descriptions of processes, junk-shop windows and back numbers of the *Exchange and Mart*, the sort of mind that likes knowing exactly how a medieval catapult worked or just what objects a prison cell of the eighteen-forties contained, then you can hardly help enjoying Reade. He himself, of course, did not see his work in quite this light. He prided himself on his accuracy and compiled his books largely from newspaper cuttings, but the strange facts which he collected were subsidiary to what he would have regarded as his "purpose." For he was a social reformer in a fragmentary way, and made vigorous attacks on such diverse evils as blood-letting, the treadmill, private lunatic asylums, clerical celibacy and tight-lacing.

My own favourite has always been *Foul Play*, which as it happens is not an attack on anything in particular. Like most nineteenth-century novels *Foul Play* is too complicated to be summarised, but its central story is that of a young clergyman, Robert Penfold, who is unjustly convicted of forgery, is transported to Australia, absconds in disguise, and is wrecked on a desert island together with the heroine. Here, of course, Reade is in his element. Of all men who ever lived, he was the best fitted to write a desert-island story. Some desert-island stories, of course, are worse than others, but none is altogether bad when it sticks to the actual concrete details of the struggle to keep alive. A list of the objects in a shipwrecked man's possession is probably the surest winner in fiction, surer even than a trial scene. Nearly thirty years after reading the book I can still remember more or less exactly what things the three heroes of Ballantyne's *Coral Island* possessed between them. (A telescope, six yards of whipcord, a pen-knife, a brass ring and a piece of hoop iron.) Even a dismal book like *Robinson Crusoe*, so unreadable as a whole that few people even know that the second part exists, becomes interesting when it describes Crusoe's efforts to make a table, glaze earthenware and grow a patch of wheat. Reade, however, was an expert on desert islands, or at any rate he was very well up in the geography textbooks of the time. Moreover he was the kind of man who would have been at home on a desert island himself. He would never, like Crusoe, have been stumped by such an easy problem as that of leavening bread, and unlike Ballantyne he knew that civilised men cannot make fire by rubbing sticks together.

The hero of *Foul Play*, like most of Reade's heroes, is a kind of superman. He is hero, saint, scholar, gentleman, athlete, pugilist, navigator, physiologist, botanist, blacksmith and carpenter all rolled into one, the sort of compendium of all the talents that Reade honestly imagined to be the normal product of an English university. Needless to say, it is only a month or two before this wonderful clergyman has got the desert island running like a West End hotel. Even before reaching the island, when the last survivors of the wrecked ship are dying of thirst in an open boat, he has shown his ingenuity by constructing a distilling apparatus with a jar, a hot-water bottle and a piece of tubing. But his best stroke of all is the way in which he contrives to leave the island. He himself, with a price on his head, would be glad enough to remain, but the heroine, Helen Rollestone, who has no idea that he is a convict, is naturally anxious to escape. She asks Robert to turn his "great mind" to this problem. The first difficulty, of course, is to discover exactly where the island is. Luckily, however, Helen is still wearing her watch, which is still keeping Sydney time. By fixing a stick in the ground and watching its shadow Robert notes the exact moment of noon, after which it is a simple matter to work out the longitude—for naturally a man of his calibre would know the longitude of Sydney. It is equally natural that he can determine the latitude within a degree or two by the nature of the vegetation. But the next difficulty is to send a message to the outside world. After some thought Robert writes a series of messages on pieces of parchment made from seals' bladders, with ink obtained from cochineal insects. He has noticed that migrant birds often use the island as a stopping-place, and he fixes on ducks as the likeliest messengers, because every duck is liable to be shot sooner or later. By a strategem often used in India he captures a number of ducks, ties a message to each of their legs and lets them go. Finally, of course, one of the ducks takes refuge on a ship, and the couple are rescued, but even then the story is barely half finished. There follow enormous ramifications, plots and counterplots, intrigues, triumphs and disasters, ending with the vindication of Robert, and wedding bells.

In any of Reade's three best books, *Foul Play*, *Hard Cash* and *It is Never too Late to Mend*, it is not fair to say that the sole interest is in the technical detail. His power of descriptive writing, especially of describing violent action, is also very striking, and on a serial-story level he is a wonderful contriver of plots. Simply as a novelist it is impossible to take him seriously, because he has no sense whatever of character or of probability, but he himself had the advantage of believing in even the absurdest details of his own stories. He wrote of life as he saw it, and many Victorians saw it in the same way: that is, as a series of tremendous melodramas, with virtue triumphant every time. Of all the nineteenth-century novelists who have remained readable, he is perhaps the only one who is completely in tune with his own age. For all his unconventionality, his "purpose," his eagerness to expose abuses, he never makes a fundamental criticism. Save for a few surface evils he sees nothing wrong in an acquisitive society, with its equation of money and virtue, its pious millionaires and erastian clergymen. Perhaps nothing gives one his measure better than the fact that in introducing Robert Penfold, at the beginning of *Foul Play*, he mentions that he is a scholar and a cricketer and only thirdly and almost casually adds that he is a priest.

That is not to say that Reade's social conscience was not sound so far as it went, and in several minor ways he probably helped to educate public opinion. His attack on the prison system in *It is Never too Late to Mend* is relevant to this day, or was so till very recently, and in his medical theories he is said to have been a long way ahead of his time. What he lacked was any notion that the early railway age, with the special scheme of values appropriate to it, was not going to last for ever. This is a little surprising when one remembers that he was the brother of Winwood Reade. However hasty and unbalanced Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom of Man* may seem now, it is a book that shows an astonishing width of vision, and it is probably the unacknowledged grandparent of the "outlines" so popular to-day. Charles Reade might have written an "outline" of phrenology, cabinet-making or the habits of whales, but not of human history. He was simply a middle-class gentleman with a little more conscience than most, a scholar who happened to prefer popular science to the classics. Just for that reason he is one of the best "escape" novelists we have. *Foul Play* and *Hard Cash* would be good books to send to a soldier enduring the miseries of trench warfare, for instance. There are no problems in them, no genuine "message," merely the fascination of a gifted mind functioning within very narrow limits, and offering as complete a detachment from real life as a game of chess or a jigsaw puzzle.

GEORGE ORWELL

A GREAT MOTHER

A Mother Fights Hitler. By IRMGARD LITTEN. *Allen and Unwin.* 7s. 6d.

When the war broke out I decided it would be a waste of time to continue reviewing anti-Hitler books, even the best. It seemed quite pointless to go on saying, "please read this—it's good—this will show you why you must hate Hitler." I felt that people who had not yet made up their minds never would. Mrs. Litten's book, and a casual remark, have shown me that I was wrong. The remark was made by the wife of a friend, a woman who passes her life in an exceptionally sensible circle. She said: "I need hardly tell you I'm not a Fascist but I do think we need a Hitler here." I am beginning to hear variations of this remark in trains, restaurants, etc. Very well. Now, the only thing is to try to make such people read the truth. If anyone (affrighted by what seems to them democratic muddle or misconduct) feels any kind of sympathy with this point of view, let them, I implore, read Mrs. Litten. Let them read her, above all if they are women with sons (or brothers, husbands, fathers) who are at all inclined to entertain old-fashioned notions about justice, loyalty to friends, and the rights of human beings. They will then be equipped to decide whether they want "a Hitler" here.

The imprisonment, torture and murder of Hans Litten provides, in its various aspects, what could be called the perfect case of the Individual *v.* the Dictator. Hans' father was a prosperous and greatly respected professor at Königsberg University; he was a Monarchist, and his reputation as a teacher had brought him the Crown Prince's son as a pupil. Mrs. Litten was herself the daughter of a University professor, and what little politics this influential family professed was something in the nature of enlightened Conservatism. The children were brought up on the following precepts:

> I taught them that material interests must never be allowed to control one's actions; that one must be faithful to one's convictions with fanatical obstinacy; that a compromise was never permissible.

She adds:

> Since I had never come into contact with the seamy side of life I had never realised what a lifelong handicap such an attitude would be.

It was an "attitude" which proved fatal. Hans grew up a lawyer, and a militant idealist. In the introduction to this English edition, Mr.

Arnold-Foster explains how it was that Hans earned the personal detestation of Hitler. Hans began to practise in 1929–30 at precisely the stage when the S.A. began their street fighting and murdering more or less openly, and when German legal procedure, under blackmail, began to lose its objectivity. Rudolf Olden writes:

> Into this world of battle and moral obtuseness came Litten, young, intelligent, but guileless; an *anima candida* . . . inspired by the irresistible desire to prevent injustice. . . . Inevitably, he came into conflict with those who were climbing to power by breaking the law.

Hans refused several lucrative posts, and soon became famous as an advocate of the poor, with, naturally, many Socialists and Communists among his clients. At the same time, he refused to prosecute Nazis when he considered the grounds unjust. His reputation became such that during his imprisonment, when his mother wished to send him parcels, the food-shops and bookshops would not let her pay. He belonged to no party; he made no money, and before long the Nazis had marked him down as one of their most alarming opponents. Eventually, after several celebrated cases there came the day, in 1931, when he was to call Hitler himself into court. At the end of a brilliant cross-examination on the Vehm murders, Hans forced his witness's hand. "I refuse to speak of murders here," Hitler yelled. "These men were defending their Fatherland." It was this incident that Hitler was never to forgive, and was to keep Hans in the concentration camps in spite of all that Lord Allen of Hurtwood and a formidable international agitation could do.

On the night of the Reichstag fire, in February 1933, Hans was arrested, and there instantly began what I believe is one of the great heroic stories of our time, the fearless, five-year-long fight between one woman and the most powerful and unscrupulous State machinery ever devised. It cannot be summarised. It can only be read. There is the long, dishonest letter from Ribbentrop. There are the interviews with Göring's frightened wife. There are the calm appeals by Hans for poison, when the torture grew too much. (He was tortured in order to force him to bear false witness against old clients.) Through it all marches the indomitable, incredibly courageous figure of Mrs. Litten. Constantly she extracted permits for visits that officials had not intended to give. Again and again she forced her way into the Gestapo offices: sometimes begging, sometimes bluffing, sometimes even threatening.

Mrs. Litten has been kind enough to come and see me. One of the things she told me was: "Why didn't they put me in prison? Because I stood up to them. I had influence, it is true, but no one helped me more than once; Blomberg, for instance. They all became afraid. But I simply went on, and in the end the Gestapo themselves said they admired me. They were puzzled because I was so impertinent. But it wasn't really impertinence—it was—well—because the only way with these people is to stand up to them."

She is still standing up to them, even in London. Her broadcasts, and the publication of this book, have all occasioned mysterious, threatening telephone calls in the early hours of the morning. They leave her unmoved. Ever since she was shown, in Dachau, the dead body of Hans, swathed to the chin like a mummy, lest she see his injuries, she continues to live with only one purpose in view. The overthrow of Hitler. If we are never to have "a Hitler here," we must find out what is needed *in ourselves* to prevent it. What is needed is something that Mrs. Litten possesses, and imparts in her book.

BRIAN HOWARD

THE ROAD TO BATH

And So To Bath. By CECIL ROBERTS. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 10s. 6d.

It is one of the paradoxes of modern life that improved transport, giving us a superficial familiarity with many places, has overtaxed and eventually weakened our curiosity and our powers of observation. Speed is the enemy of detail. This truth came to Mr. Roberts when he realised that his journeys from London along the Bath Road to his home were dominated by the idea of *arriving*, and the result is a very readable and entertaining guide-book to one of the most travelled roads in the world.

Mr. Roberts's spur was a young Austrian who wanted to see the birthplace of Samuel Richardson. From this he went on to look for other birthplaces and places of historical interest along his homeward road. His curiosity was rewarded with Syon House and Osterley Park; with Chiswick House, Lord Burlington's creation which later became a lunatic asylum and is now public property; and Gore House, made famous by Lady Blessington. Slough recalled Herschel, the astronomer, of whom Mr. Roberts writes fully and well. Sir Joseph Banks, patron of Captain Cook and friend of Jenner, is another scientist encountered on the way. Many of the celebrities of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have left some memento of themselves on the road to Bath, and Mr. Roberts has planned his book to accommodate a good store of anecdotes. Some of them are the routine and hackneyed gossip of history, such as Marlborough's jump from the window and Duval's roadside *coranto*; but there are less familiar stories which make the book worth reading. In 1827 the Berkeley Hunt hunted a stag from Cranford to the British Museum. The highwaymen on Hounslow Heath included a Bishop who robbed his own guests on their way

The
MEDITERRANEAN NORTH AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST
are shown in detail in the

Daily Telegraph
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TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

'A play that it is useless to describe. To say that it depicts the victory of hope and the belief that civilisation has still a dog's chance over the certainty that it hasn't, is to give the vaguest and crudest indication of the author's purpose. *Thunder Rock* has just been published by Hamish Hamilton, at 5s. My advice would be, see the play, then read the book, then see the play again. Or book-play-book if you prefer.' SPECTATOR

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HAMISH HAMILTON

home. Then there was a Lord Savernake, known as Lord Stomach-ache, who married "The Marchioness Dorothy, née Tester, late of the refreshment department of the Theatre Royal, Brighton"; at the wedding Lord Stomach-ache described himself as a cab-proprietor and dressed the part in "a bird's-eye blue belcher, a drab box-cloth coat with large mother o' pearl buttons, and a coachman's hat." And lastly John Pordage who "while preaching fell into a trance and rushed out of the church and went to his house where he found his wife cloathed all in white lawn with a rod in her hand. Ten other women came in and all fell to dancing the Hays about the flower pots." Mr. Roberts might have mentioned Pordage's son, Samuel, an accomplished poet, although he is now remembered only as "lame Mephibosheth" in *Absalom and Achitophel.* DESMOND HAWKINS

SAHIBS OR SOCIALISTS?

Barbarians and Philistines: Democracy and the Public Schools. By T. C. WORSLEY. *Hale.* 10s. 6d.

The public schools have been under fire from the Left for a considerable time and in recent years the attacks have grown in number and intensity. The most successful offensive has often come from a schoolmaster who, like Mr. Pekin, has crossed over from the public to the progressive school. Such critics have, however, always been open to the facile, but to many people convincing, retort that the progressive schoolmaster is a crank. Mr. Worsley cannot be dismissed upon these grounds; he was a public schoolboy and a public schoolmaster, and he is aware both of the merits and defects of the progressive school embedded in a public school system. He has written an admirable book, and one hopes against hope that, even with the Nazi sitting on the doorstep of our island fortress, it will get the attention that it deserves. It is a devastating study and analysis, not only of our public schools, but our whole educational system, and it has the great merit of being constructive as well as destructive. Every democrat and Socialist who still believes that after defeating Hitler we must undertake the even harder battle of conquering ourselves, should read the last part of Mr. Worsley's book. It contains the outlines of an educational system for the future and the place of the public schools in it. It is admittedly only a sketch, but Mr. Worsley's experience and practical intelligence make it extremely valuable. One can say, dogmatically but safely, that if our school system is not remodelled after the war much on his lines, even though we have beaten Hitler, we shall again have lost a war for democracy.

Mr. Worsley begins by showing what was the aetiology of the public school of the last part of the nineteenth century. This accounts for the title of his book. For he adopts Matthew Arnold's distinction between the aristocratic class which in Britain is barbarian, and the middle class which is philistine. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the public schools were purely barbarian. The industrial revolution caused a struggle between the barbarians and philistines for power and, like most British struggles, it ended in a compromise—the two classes merged into one. The public school, the instrument of education for the merged classes, has to this day retained the marks of that compromise, and in the hands of Arnold of Rugby and Thring of Uppingham their crude barbarism was overlaid with a thick covering of bourgeois respectability and Christianity. Mr. Worsley gives a fascinating description of the gradual development of the modern public school system by means of a series of quotations from *Tom Brown's Schooldays* to *Stalkey & Co.*, *The Hill*, and *The Lighter Side of School Life.* But the social form of a social institution is ultimately determined by its social function, and in the class society of the latter days of the nineteenth century the function of the public school was to train the young of the dominant classes to exercise power in a society built upon an economic and social hierarchy of classes. It did this with outstanding success. The public school system was and still is one of the strongest bulwarks against the growth of democracy, and even more against the growth of democratic Socialism. Mr. Worsley insists upon its authoritarian basis and its close connection with imperialism; his demonstration of its resemblance to the Nazi system and the *Führerprinzip* will shock and enrage many people. His demonstration may be just a little one-sided, for it does not allow quite enough place for other strands in the British social tradition, but there is undoubtedly a great deal of truth in what he says. (It is an interesting fact, which has escaped even Mr. Worsley's notice, that Kipling, the most distinguished advocate of the public school as a breeder of little Führers, thirty years before Hitler realised the significance of the swastika as an emblem, for in his collected edition opposite every title page there is a reproduction of his autograph within a circle and surmounted by a swastika.)

Mr. Worsley is right in diagnosing the Boer War as a turning point in the history of Britain and the Empire. Up to that time the public school performed successfully a function which was relevant to the whole context of British society. After 1900 it was nothing but an anachronism. The Kiplingesque barbarian-philistine adolescent who developed into the Kiplingesque subaltern and empire-builder and ultimately into the Tory clubman, was totally incompetent to deal with a world dominated by large-scale industry, machines, mathematical formulæ, and totalitarian States. In this new world he was neither a sahib nor a Socialist, but the world demanded inexorably that he should make up his mind to be either the one or the other. The sahib of the new world is a Nazi, a Fascist, or a Communist; the Socialist of the new world, if he is not to enter their camp, must combine Socialism with uncompromising democracy, and the war which we are now fighting, if it is not fought for democratic Socialism against sahibism, will prove to be as meaningless as the previous one. But one only has to state these truisms to see that the public school and the public schoolboy are anachronisms which have fallen between the two stools.

LEONARD WOOLF

NEW NOVELS

Moment in Peking. By LIN YUTANG. *Heinemann.* 15s.

Trouble in July. By ERSKINE CALDWELL. *Cape.* 7s. 6d.

Country Tales. By H. E. BATES. *Cape.* 7s. 6d.

Great Powers export their culture as well as their machine tools, and hence are usually somewhat self-satisfied about their own literary products; yet even England has repeatedly succumbed to the glamour of the foreign label. On the whole, however, despite occasional fads for Hindu metaphysics or Slavonic folk tales, the Western intelligentsia have imported their culture only from each other, and have been fairly fitted to criticise one another's literature because, like their cooking, it is based on the same ingredients. For Eastern countries the situation has been far different. In most spheres that could be pragmatically tested—in war, in science, in organisation—the West had a patent advantage and the Oriental intellectual consequently assumed that European art and culture must be as superior as its railway engines. Lin Chin-nan's translations of Conan Doyle and Sir Walter Scott thrilled young China as the bread of a higher society, and blew down respect for

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the subtle complexities of the great classics as surely as the British cannon had blasted down the carved and crenellated walls of old Peking.

Moment in Peking is a carefully written and closely woven narrative of the Westernisation of China. The story begins with the Boxer rising, the first serious reaction against European influence, follows the increasing turmoil of the Regency, the Republic and the anarchic reign of the war lords, and ends with the invasion of the Japanese and the great retreat from the old cities of the North to the precarious new civilisation building itself up in the interior. Mr. Lin Yutang is not primarily concerned with political or social changes, but indicates their effects upon a small group of wealthy families, and illustrates the impact of the new outlook by the gradual changes in their cultivated personal relationships. There are no flamboyant set pieces, but an almost exaggerated understatement—the difficulties of relations with a son's concubine are given as much weight as invasion, rape and murder—and the author writes in a convention of restraint that forbids both the tricks and the grandeurs of the European novel. Yet, nevertheless, the book has a taste of the epic about it, and an intenseness of feeling that its urbanity of style accentuates rather than conceals. Except on inessentials, Mr. Lin Yutang carefully refrains from comment upon the decline and fall (or, if you like, the growth and rise) of the culture he describes. At the beginning, girls kneel before their aunts and children exchange classical aphorisms; by the end, there are tennis parties, mission schools and detective stories; at the beginning, there is slavery and decapitation, at the end, there are democrats in bombing planes. China itself still retains much of its old shape; it still names its mountains after ancient poets, and still calls a dish of chicken and sausages "Famous Scholar's Abandon." Will it adapt itself within the framework of its old ideas? Will it re-name baked beans "First-class Technician's Evening Off," and find new classics to replace the old, or will it follow the pattern to the full conclusion and become as similar to Europe as Provence is to Picardy? Mr. Yutang offers no opinion, but his book, the only one of its kind by a Chinese cosmopolitan that I have encountered, gives ample material for those who wish to form one.

Mr. Caldwell enjoys a triple distinction that any writer would envy. Not only is he respected by the critics as a stylist and admired by the Left Wing as a fearless radical; he is also revered as the author of a play, still running in New York, that has beaten the record of *Chu Chin Chow* by a good many performances. He is that remarkable figure, as rare and priceless as the phoenix, the highbrow six-figure best-seller. *Trouble in July*, however, is by no means of his usual high standard, and, were not such a thing so patently absurd, might be suspected of being a pot-boiler. The plot—an innocent negro, a nymphomaniac white gal, a puzzled, well-meaning sheriff, a horrid lynching—is an old favourite, and the style, generally, is that familiar one redolent of blood, sweat, and whip-leather, of which the author is such a master. Unfortunately, Mr. Caldwell seems unable to keep it up. We have the usual rich stuff ("Sheriff Jeff McCurtain was knee-deep and belly-floundered in a patch of rank pigweed when dawn broke"), and are treated to a rape and several atrocities, but in between times there are attempts to pad out the story by imitation Hemingway, and pointless pages are devoted to accounts of the Sheriff putting on his trousers or wondering whether to answer the phone. The trouble, I believe, is that Mr. Caldwell has written his subject out. Even in the Southern States there are limits to man's inhumanity to man, and the repetition of similar brutalities rapidly becomes as wearisome as the torments of Foxe's Martyrs. The psychology of oppression is, perhaps, an interesting study, but its simple execution, no matter how well described, loses its initial effects as quickly as alcohol, and has to be laid on in ever-increasing quantities to arouse the desired reaction. *Trouble in July* is grotesque, amusing and in parts horrifying, but it does nothing save narrate simple events without either analysis or explanation. It is a short novel, but somehow an empty one, and draws its vitality almost entirely from its horrors. It should—and may—mark the end of a stage in Mr. Caldwell's development.

Most people who are in the least interested in the short story know Mr. Bates's work, and need only be told that the thirty stories included in *Country Tales* are selected from his works of the last twelve years, and contain such old acquaintances as *The Black Boxer*, *The Mill*, and *The Kimono*. The interest of this collection is that it gives, so to speak, a bird's-eye cross-section of Mr. Bates's growing talent. He is preoccupied primarily with atmosphere, and even in those tales which have a definite plot, the narrative is allowed to slip into the background. Unlike most of the atmospheric school, however, he has a hard grasp of reality (perhaps preserved by his interest in country matters), and never, save in his first book, allows his detail to become hazy because his theme is undefined. His trick, or rather craft, is first to select and isolate a situation, and then to describe it precisely, so that his stories are rigidly restricted in scope and character but worked out with the utmost delicacy. His work, more than that of any other living English writer, approximates in spirit to the sonnet. It is confined in breadth and treatment, it can never be tragedy or epic, but it can, in its way, be perfect.

JOHN MAIR

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GEORGE III

The Lone Monarch. By GUY M. BOUSTEAD. *Lane.* 15s.

Some books are written to prove a thesis. Others develop their thesis in the process of writing as definite conclusions emerge from the author's discoveries. Mr. Boustead's method seems to have been rather different. One is tempted to suppose that he may first have written his narrative, then looked round for a thesis to give it point and make a brave show in the accompanying "blurb" and foreword. So very slight a connection does there appear to exist between the portrait that Mr. Boustead actually draws and the legend that he wishes to inscribe beneath! "It may well be" (he announces in his preface) "that George III's political activities were to some extent influenced by his private animosities" (a suggestion that gains added weight with every succeeding chapter) "but there is considerable evidence to show that he was perfectly aware of the main political problem of his time. He understood that the time had come to wrest the power from the ruling families and to distribute it over a broader section of the political and social structure." By doing this (continues the note printed on the dust cover) he saved the realm from imminent catastrophe. ". . . But for him, the Monarchy and the upper classes might have followed the way of those of France in the Revolution."

Both statements may cause a good deal of honest perplexity either to the professional historian or to the general reader. It is true that George resented the power exercised by the great Whig families; but there is little evidence that he wished to distribute that power over a broader field. Indeed, all the evidence at our command seems to point in just the opposite direction and to encourage a belief that he wished to concentrate it in the hands of the monarch. As for

the idea that he rescued the country from revolution, one can only object that he made the monarchy intensely unpopular (though popular feeling softened towards him during his dotage), that he was the sworn enemy of some of the most gifted and patriotic statesmen of the period in which he lived, and that his interference during a number of major crises enraged his loyal subjects to the verge of open insurrection.

"Private animosities" undoubtedly swayed him, and his theories of kingship (in so far as they were coherent and logical) were less his own than an inheritance from his immediate forbears. Frederick Prince of Wales, that brisk mercurial nobody, had been deeply affected by the doctrines he had absorbed at the feet of Bolingbroke and had learned to see himself under the attractive figure of the "People's Prince." The monarch should be superior to party government: he should enjoy a much more real and decisive authority than was possible given the present system of parliamentary procedure: he should be at once a tribune of the people and a benevolent despot.

It was Bolingbroke's elegant sophistical theorising, filtered through the somewhat opaque medium of Frederick's intelligence and simplified by the feminine craft of the Princess, that produced ultimately Augusta's notorious admonition to her obedient and devoted son: "George, be a king!" And it was George's obstinate determination to follow her precepts, coupled with a tendency to identify his own inherited prejudices and private animosities with the interests of the country and the monarchy personified in himself, that involved him in a long and dismal series of reverses, humiliations and disasters.

The title Mr. Boustead has chosen—with its hint of noble isolation and lonely grandeur—seems particularly unfortunate, whether considered from the literary or from the historical standpoint. Any very obstinate man is apt to be isolated. Any monarch is inclined to be lonely if he prefers to surround himself with advisers of the calibre of Bute and North. And how stubbornly George clung to the favourites he had selected—particularly to poor, well-meaning, flustered North—has been revealed by the publication of their correspondence. Nothing could be more ludicrous or more pathetic than North's attempts to escape from the responsibilities of an office for which he knew that he was totally unfitted. Again and again, North proclaimed his conviction of his own incapability, "conscious (he wailed, on March 15th, 1778) how totally unfit he is in every respect to cope with the present difficulties of the country," and convinced (as he admitted in a later letter) of his complete inadequacy, physical and intellectual, his "want of ability and decision in matters of nice importance." But what happened? Let Mr. Boustead take up the story:

> George, however secretly dismayed, stuck to his guns. Nothing could shake the conviction of that dogged and slow-moving mind that there could be no greater calamity than the weakening of the newly restored authority of the Crown. Defeat and dishonour, suffering and ruin, all this might be borne if the Crown retained undiminished the supremacy he had bought for it in the open market of political intrigue.

Sentences of this kind are hardly compatible with the view of George III as a really public-spirited or genuinely far-sighted ruler. Mr. Boustead's apologia is confined for the most part to the region of his preface: it is seldom supported by the text that follows. Nor is the style he has adopted very helpful—hovering as it does between a perfunctory colloquialism and the well-worn phraseology of a sixth-form history book. The inclusion of bright journalistic chapter headings: *The Young Idea, Sweethearts and Wives, Thin Ice, At Long Last, Twilight*, etc., etc., is singularly inappropriate to a serious study.

PETER QUENNELL

FABIAN BAEDEKER

Modern Turkey. By JOHN PARKER, M.P., and CHARLES SMITH. *Routledge.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Since the publication of the Webbs' classic work on Soviet Russia, the Fabian Society has shown an ever-increasing interest in foreign affairs. Recently a group of Fabians toured Sweden and reported on its findings, and now the General Secretary and Mr. Charles Smith give us a survey of modern Turkey, inspired by their studies on the spot. One characteristic is common to all the Fabian tourists. They travel as prospectors for new trends in democratic civilisation, and a certain prim austerity of style shows that they are the true descendants of the founders of "Gas and Water Socialism." This report on Turkey is "of course" enormously more valuable than the reportage of the ordinary traveller or journalist. But its virtues have their own defects. By remaining so strictly a social and political *analysis*, it sometimes fails to create a living picture of Turkish life and Turkish history; and in the effort to present bare facts even lapses into officialese. Observe, for instance, this cautious reference to the private life of Kemal:

> Some of his biographers have relieved their political narration by highly coloured pictures of drinking bouts which he had from time to time, when he cared for no company but that of a small clique of drunkards and debauchees, whose political influence, however, he strictly confined to precisely nil. This relief from the strain of politics further weakened his health. . . .

Since the history of modern Turkey is really the biography of Ataturk, the dictator in tails, the authors should not be so austere or allusive in describing his personality. You do not really approximate to truth by toning all colours down to a dull grey, particularly when you are dealing with the Near East. When they let themselves go, as in their description of Kayseri, they show that they have an excellent eye for the dramatic contrasts between modern industry and medieval squalor which typify Turkey to-day. I only wish they had let themselves go oftener and found room for more colour by excising such "conclusions" as:

> Turkish agriculture still presents a variety of problems for solution; but, provided that a policy can be devised to meet these problems, it has great potentialities.

Having made this criticism, let me recommend *Modern Turkey* as a thoroughly competent study of a fascinating country. The authors give a clear picture of the tasks which the Republic had to face and the way it has tackled the basic problems of the countryside, of foreign capitalist investment and of the stimulation of home industry, as well as useful summaries of modern Turkish history and in particular of Turkish foreign policy. When they turn to politics their treatment is not quite so satisfactory. What is a Fabian prospector to make of a regime which is violently nationalist—though not imperialist—forbids Trade Unions and permits the private accumulation of capital, and bases itself upon a one-party system? Mr. Parker and Mr. Smith obviously are in sympathy with the new Turkey. Anxious to show both that Turkey is not Fascist and that its rulers are wise to eschew the formal democracy of the Weimar Republic, they write:

> All this means that Turkey is free from the sharp social cleavages and class-conflicts which exist in Germany and Italy. There does in fact exist . . . sufficient community of interest between the different sections of the population to make a one-party system reasonable.

This seems to me the wrong line of defence for modern Turkey; and it is contradicted by the evidence which they themselves collect of conflict between an over-taxed small peasantry and a class of landowners, and of the poor

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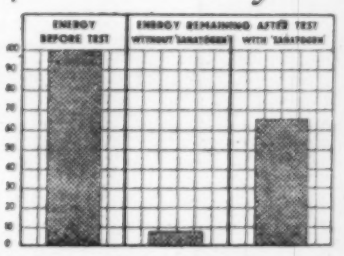

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working conditions in private industry. A real community of interest would make not a one- but a two-party system reasonable, since it would ensure that free debate could proceed without resulting in class violence. The authors are on safer ground when, in passing, they compare Kemal with the Tudor monarchs. This is a profoundly fruitful analogy since it reminds us that Turkey's development—centuries behind that of Western Europe—makes most modern comparisons, in terms of politics, futile. Kemal had to carry out in a twentieth-century world a fifteenth-century revolution; and the political institutions suitable to such a transformation are neither the "democracy" nor the "fascism" of Western Europe, but a centralised authoritarian regime designed to *create* for the first time a national will. Why Kemal's One-Party State was justifiable is because it was imposed on a primitive community, not like National Socialism on a highly developed Western people. If modern comparisons must be made, they should surely be with Soviet Russia. Perhaps it is over-solicitude for Soviet feelings which has prevented the authors from doing this. The impression they leave is that, without any ideological self-advertisement, the Turks are accomplishing a social revolution as drastic and considerably more humane, after the initial horrors, than that of the U.S.S.R. In the long view, Kemal's experiment may be more fruitful because it is built on no dogma. He did not "abolish class-conflict" as Stalin claims to have done; but his successors may find it easier to develop a real democracy just because he never pretended to be building a classless society. He simply wanted to create a modern Turkish State and openly admitted his delight in those capitalist fripperies, the tail-coat and the jazz-band. Would Russia have been happier with a Stalin in tails?

RICHARD COVENTRY

TOPICAL HISTORY

The Mongol Empire. By MICHAEL PRAWDIN. Translated by EDEN and CEDAR PAUL. *Allen and Unwin.* 21s.

There are fashions in historical subjects as in everything else; and the Mongols (having been much neglected in the textbooks) have been fashionable for some time of late. But there may be some significance in the fact that this book by a Russian author was originally published in Germany in 1938 and immediately scored a great success, being subsequently translated into several European languages and into Japanese. We are informed that it has sold over 100,000 copies. This success can hardly be due to its intrinsic merits as an historical narrative. The publisher's blurb announces that it is "a standard work written equally for the serious student of history and for the reader who likes an exciting story that keeps him in breathless suspense." But the author is a skilful populariser rather than an historian (his previous book was *The Mad Queen of Spain*) and the student will be irritated to distraction by a book composed in the worst tradition of romanticised history, in which it is never possible to check the source of any statement and in which epic, serious history and the imagination of the author are in one red burial blent. This sort of history cup bears the same relation to history as claret cup to claret. As to the reader who likes an exciting story, he will find a good many *longueurs* to be skipped, especially in the first part, and may find the continual blare as of trumpets tedious after a while.

Not that the book is without merit, for there are good pages of straightforward narrative and others in which Marco Polo and contemporary writers have been well used to sketch in a background. Moreover, the story itself is such a good one that no amount of overwriting can entirely spoil it. But it is not its merits as an historical work or an exciting story that have won the book its 100,000 readers. It is without doubt the topicality of some and in particular of two of the subjects with which it deals.

To begin with, the military measures by which the Mongol hordes created an empire stretching from one end of Asia to the other and spilling over into Russia and Hungary, anticipate (*mutatis mutandis*) the military methods by which the Germans have spread over Europe in 1940, and which they were already practising in 1938. The Mongol horsemen of the thirteenth century were the *Panzer Divisionen* of to-day. Their forces were small compared with those which opposed them, but nothing had ever been seen to equal the extraordinary speed with which they advanced, their skill in maintaining their lines of communication over wide areas and their deliberate use of terrorisation as a military weapon:

> The first blow was to strike terror and panic into the remotest limits of the country, to paralyse it by arousing a sense of such elemental and unavoidable destruction that resistance would seem foolish. . . . Nothing was to be left of a conquered town beyond what might be useful to the Mongols. . . . People forsook their towns and villages . . . the instant these fearsome riders approached, for the invaders were regarded as devils incarnate, as the scourge of God. . . . No one guessed that this campaign of terror was a deliberate war-policy, partly intended to give the impression that the number of the invaders was limitless. Not more than 150,000 Mongolian riders in all had invaded Europe, but these, led with consummate strategy, accustomed to work on a large scale, to cover distances incredible to Europeans with a speed which the mail-clad and cumbrous chivalry of the European Middle Ages, backed only by miscellaneous mass-levies, could never dream of, could in one day set more than fifty miles of country in flames and on the next be ready to fight a decisive battle at such a distance that the foe could never believe them to be the same army.

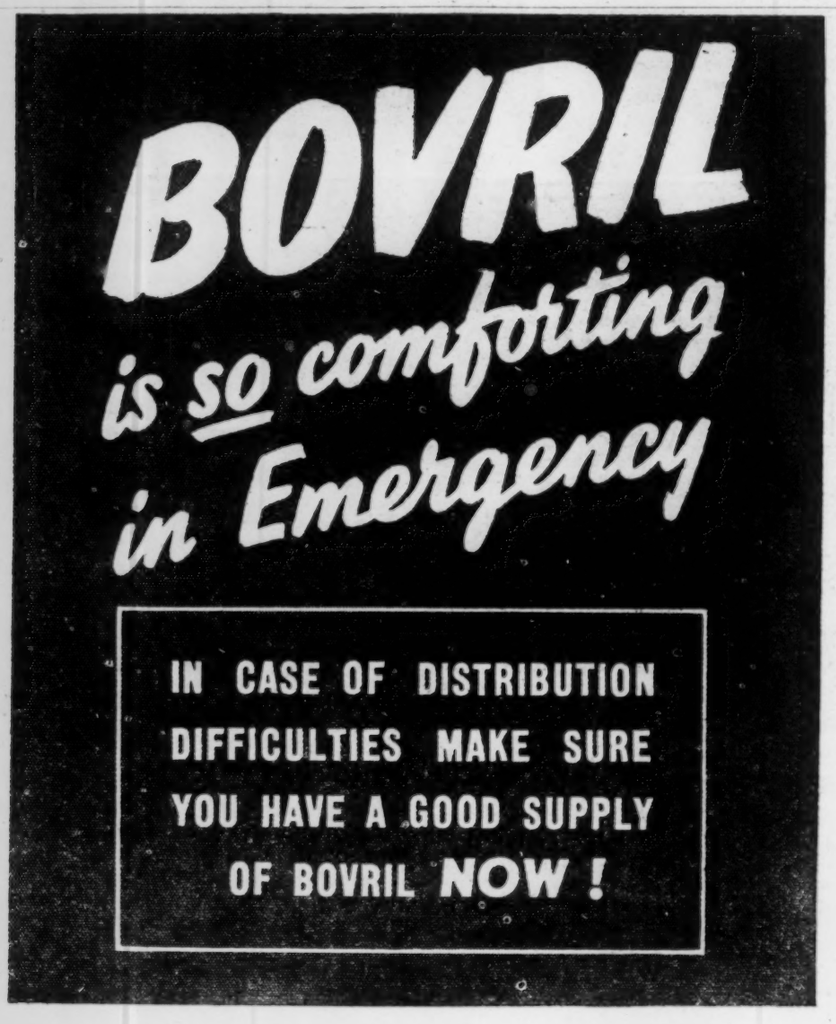
Here surely is one reason for the success of this book. The other is equally topical and probably accounts for the translation into Japanese. It is made overt in an epilogue. Mongolia is "the key of Asia." When the unity of the Mongol conquests broke up by the close of the fifteenth century the era of land empires and caravan routes ended with it, and the era of sea routes and sea power began. Then, "the central regions of the Europasian continent ceased to count in universal history." But now once more the struggle for the domination of Asia is being waged upon the ancient uplands of Genghis Khan:

> The attack of the Island Realm upon China was initiated from the seaboard. During recent centuries China's centre of gravity has been shifting towards the coast, but the coast is peculiarly vulnerable. The "treaty ports" are being pulverised and burned, while China retires into the measureless spaces of her land territories to draw fresh energies from the Wild West. Fully aware of the peril, Japan has thrust a wedge far into the interior, but still further west, in the heart of the continental block, the old caravan route is coming to life once more; and now, instead of camels laden with bales of silk, lorries freighted with firearms and munitions pant as they climb the lofty passes. . . .

EILEEN POWER

Horizon. 1s.

The September issue of *Horizon* provides a particularly good occasion for reminding the intelligent reading public that this admirable monthly still continues, and needs, as it deserves, support. While naturally the war obtrudes more and more into its pages, its literary interest remains paramount. In this number there is a strong poetry section including a Day Lewis, a John Betjemann and a Rodgers; Arthur Calder Marshall contributes a sharply written story, and there is a quite excellent study of Kipling by Hugh Kingsmill. The transition to the war is provided by Brian Howard's reportage of the civil evacuation from France, with its touching and moving dedication. The left wing



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2, Shelley Avenue,
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Having been a sufferer from hay fever since I was 8 years old and am now 34 years of age, I dread summer time coming and have lost good situations through having to cease work. From 8 to 12 weeks it lasts. I have tried everything and anything to try and get a little relief and as a last resource my wife told me to try some of her 'ASPRO' which she has for her head. Since trying same I have not only been able to carry on work, but to work in a hayfield which previously I used to avoid.

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"CAVALRY, EGAD!"

"STRANGE DAYS, strange days—to think that the old 93rd Horse should be careering around in these odd contraptions. Still, the men are of the same stuff—and, by jiminy, I notice that they still smoke my old favourite Murray's. I remember in 1815 enjoying a surreptitious pipeful behind a hayrick near Rougemont. . . ."

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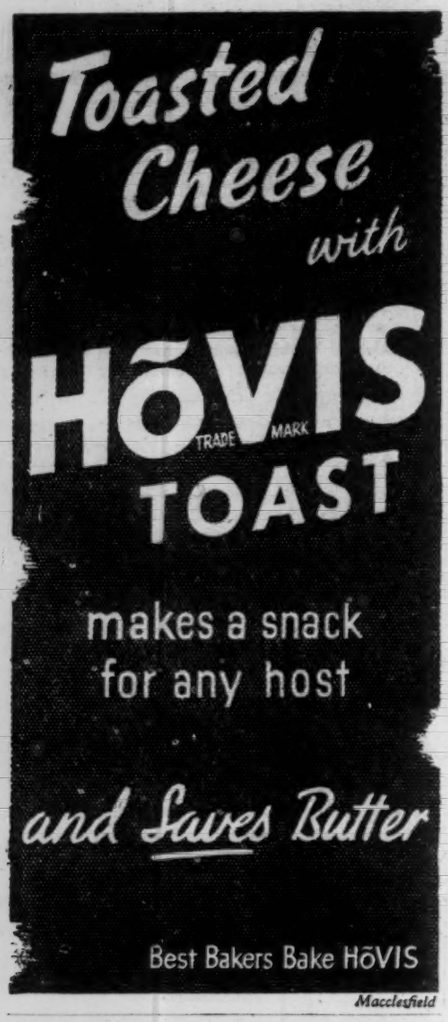

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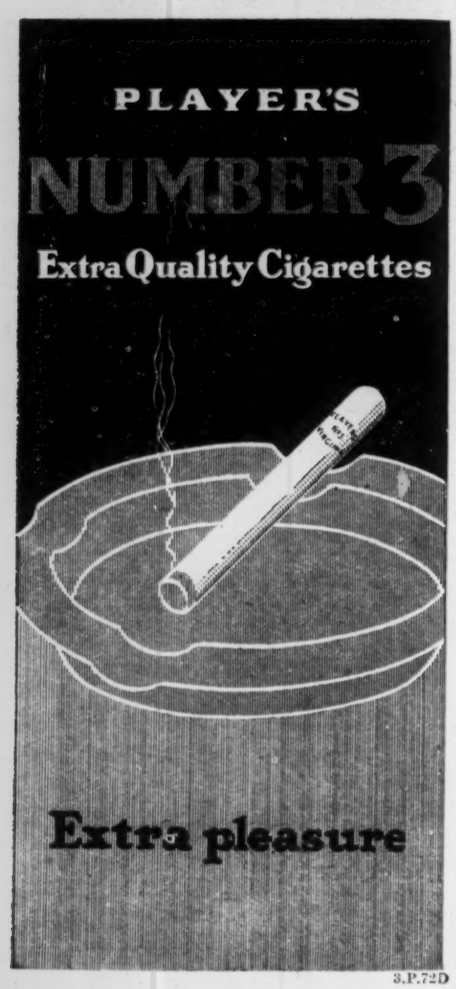

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case against the war as at present conducted is put at its baldest by an American Trotskyite and the editorial comment, analysing that view, convicts it of over-simplification. The illustrations are reproductions of propaganda posters from Republican Spain chosen to display by contrast the inadequacy of our efforts in this respect; and finally Stephen Spender defines his own attitude to the war in what is, we believe, the first full-length statement to be made by one of the group with which he is commonly associated.

Week-end Competitions

No. 549

Set by Zita Crossman

A popular novelty, according to the newspapers, is to have engraved on your wedding ring an inscription appropriate to your occupation; thus Airmen are reported to have chosen "Happy Landings!" Sailors, "Jack's the boy!" etc. The usual prizes are offered for the best half-dozen inscriptions suitable to the following occupations. Air Raid Warden; Buchmanite; Parachutist; War Office Major; Butcher; Nippy; Mass Observer; University Don; Competition Setter; Popular Novelist; Engine Driver; Leader Writer; Dance Hostess; Mr. Sensible; B.B.C. Announcer; Fifth Columnist.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, August 23.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned—When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 547

Set by Guy Innes

The usual prizes will be given for a Poem of any number of words up to 240 dealing with the high cost of smoking, and making use to the utmost of such extravagant and far-fetched rhymes as Barham's "Mephistopheles" and "cup of hot coffee lees," or Browning's "ranunculus" and "Tommy-make-room-for-your-uncle-us." The more polysyllabic the rhymes, the better.

Report by Guy Innes

As some competitors perceived, this competition was harder than it looked, and many of them did not go beyond dissyllabic rhymes, though polysyllabism was intended to be nine points of the score. These sesquipedalian rhymes (though some latitude was granted) should be constructed with exactitude, while not losing sight of accidence and scansion; otherwise a line may be thrown out of gear. A few aspirants failed to observe the word-limit of 240. William Stewart would otherwise have been a winner; for his rhyming was admirable, though once or twice the thin ice over which he skated creaked ominously. Some, in their anxiety to achieve a rhyme, abandoned reason. Others ambitiously entrusted themselves to a vehicle which came down out of control, with the sequel of what might be called "A Grammarian's Funeral." For them is the consoling reflection from the poem of that name, which exemplifies the rhyming which this competition exploits:

> That low man goes on adding one to one,
> His hundred's soon hit:
> This high man, aiming at a million,
> Misses an unit.

A faulty ear was the cause of several disqualifications. The terms of reference did not permit such dislocations as "atavism" coupled with "(the) matter with 'em," "hydrocephalous" and "bref of us," "butter for brains" and "mutter of drains," "crack a joke" and "tobacco smoke," and "good lines" and "Woodbines."

"Q. R.'s" choice of words was so eclectic that, had he taken more trouble with his rhymes, he would have been rewarded. It grieved me to disqualify "Biltong," whose sense of plot was masterly; but Fabergé, master of bijouterie though he was, will not go in double harness with "stab her—Jay"; while "fuliginous" and "unruly genus" is more than the traffic will bear. Yet "euthanasia" and "uncouth an ace here" would wring tears from a stone, while "taxation" and "Waacs Asian" approaches genius. The braw Scots effort of Lance-Corporal Kenneth Brill, rhyming "use Tate's, man, and nae shun" with "New Statesman and Nation" deserves a sergeant's stripes. But though he sometimes caught the ring of the blows, he failed on the whole to emulate his exemplar, of whom it was written:

> And Browning, in his iron style,
> Doth gold on his rude anvil smite.

R. S. Jaffray's verbal elastic, ingeniously stretched, snapped when he attempted to make "no" a dissyllable.

Honourable mention is accorded to John Young, who failed to fulfil the brilliant promise of his coinage "'bacca-laureate"; L. V. Upward, Little Billee, C. F. Rathbone, and Gerald Summers. First prize goes to C. P. Harvey, and second prize to Willy Tadpole. Their contributions follow:

FIRST PRIZE

OBSERVATIONS ON THE HIGH COST OF SMOKING

To smoke or not to smoke? That is the quandary
Put to the patriot by the Board of Revenue.
Renounce the weed and save? Or smoke and squander? He
Must choose. Stout Raleigh, in your tax-free heaven you
Who opened up Virginia, deathless pioneer,
Must shudder at the fiscal rack we lie on here!

Tobacco duty soars till sheer exasperation
The citizen inhales with every whiff he gets,
And wonders: should he not cut out his gasperation
And bang the saving into War Certificates,
Thus helping Hitler to a swift and vivid end
While earning for himself a modest dividend?

But no; not his to yield to paltry compromises
'Twixt smoking and the purchase of securities.
The nation's strength to answer bomb for bomb premises
His savings *plus* his taxes to ensure it. He's
But wanting in his duty if to save he cuts
His total taxed expenditure on Navy Cuts.

Up then, the heirs of Raleigh! Nor disown a smoke
Which costs a pound for every honest shilling's worth.
Is Churchill's self not girdled in Corona smoke?
And who knows better what a Nazi killing's worth?
The war is England's own, and we must pay for it—
Who'll grudge the cost of twenty Craven "A" for it?

C. P. HARVEY

SECOND PRIZE

TOBACCO'S EXCUSE

The man whom I fumigate
'Gainst his own gloom I gate
When at his ease he is wanting to doff his
Daily anxieties
As to what diet is
Best for a wage-slave at bench or in office.

Leisure I sanctify;
I should be thanked if I
Keep him sweet-tempered and free from depravity.
Of no one a grudger, he
Free from his drudgery
Takes up his briar and fills its concavity.

Why should he puff it less?
He can't go buffetless;
Let him continue. Sir Kingsley *pro tem.* shun
Further increases
Until happy Peace is
Pledge of relief or perchance of exemption.

This I can testify:
He will not rest if I
Fill not his pouch; *then* he's strong though dumb fort.
Let Melancholia
Fade *inter folia*,
Finding therein a relief and a comfort.

WILLY TADPOLE

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By CYNICUS

INFLATION AND THE COMING INCREASE IN RAILWAY FARES—CAPITAL LEVIES AND TIN

As German bombers tend to fall, share prices tend to rise. It only needs a Heinkel to crash in flames on Throgmorton Street to start a boom at Denham. There is no logic in it, but is there any logic in the gilt edged market whose calm confidence suggests an early victory and no inflation? No one doubts an ultimate victory, but who believes in no inflation?

***

Everyone knows that in economic affairs the Government has a drift rather than a policy, the drift being towards inflation. For this reason it is rather hard on the railways to be blamed for an inflationary drift which they did not create, but their application for a further increase—equivalent to about 6.8 per cent. on present rates—in railway fares will undoubtedly be very unpopular. The 10 per cent. rise in railway charges on May 1st was calculated to produce only £18 millions towards an estimated increase in costs of £26¾ millions. The war agreement which the railways signed with the Government provided for an increase in fares and charges to meet the increased costs of working. The Government wanted the railways to stand on their own legs and if they enjoyed real prosperity it wanted to share in it. When the pooled revenues of the main line companies and the London Passenger Transport Board exceed £43½ millions, the Government takes half the excess and when they exceed £68 millions the Government takes the entire excess. The Government can, therefore, retard the rise in railway fares and charges by surrendering its own share of railway profits when the pooled revenues exceed £43½ millions. If railway earnings are already in excess of that amount, as I believe, the Government should be asked to surrender its profits without delay and this, I suggest, should be the public line of attack upon the proposed increase in fares.

***

Certainly the present war agreement with the railways is a more honest and realistic one than the 1914–21 agreement. In the last war, the Government maintained railway rates and charges at their 1913 level until 1917. The railways were never operated on an economic basis in that period and even when they were ordered at the end of the war to increase passenger fares by 75 per cent. and goods charges by 112 per cent. above pre-war rates, the yield did not allow the managements to make good the war arrears of maintenance, so that the Government had to pay the railways a large sum by way of compensation. Under the present war agreement, the public does at least know where it stands. It has to pay for increased costs of working as it uses the railways. It has even to pay for the first £10 millions of war damage for the railways have power to increase fares and charges to make good that amount of frightfulness. (Over £10 millions the railways have to charge war damage to revenue account to the detriment of dividends and wait until the end of the war for the Government's general scheme of war-damage compensation.) If with the Government's drift towards inflation wages are allowed to chase prices and every increase in railway fares and charges is followed by increase in railway wages, do not blame the poor railways!

***

I referred recently to the veiled and unfair levy on private capital which the Treasury and Inland Revenue were respectively perpetrating in the requisitioning of dollar securities and in imposing 100 per cent. Excess Profits Tax on mining companies depleting their mineral reserves. I am glad to see two protests. First *The Economist* shows up the illegal Treasury order to bankers and brokers, whose relations with their clients are of a special fiduciary character, to surrender currency securities without the knowledge of their owners. The Tin Producers' Association have now addressed a memorandum to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the other point. The capital of a mining company is represented by its reserves of ore in the ground as well as by the plant used to extract this ore. A proportion of the proceeds of every ton of ore extracted therefore represents a return of capital, since the ore cannot be replaced. Thus, a tin mining company which has been asked to produce at full capacity (130 per cent.) will be exhausting its reserves and shortening its life without any extra profit and at the cost of the confiscation of part of its capital. As the Finance Bill stands to-day, mining companies are allowed an increase in the substitute (capital) standard up to 4 per cent. but only to the extent necessary to allow for the exhaustion of their natural source of minerals or oil at a greater rate than capital expenditure in other trades. This seems a very inadequate concession and if the Labour Opposition do not like to extend it because of the unpopularity of the coal industry, which would naturally benefit, I suggest that the coal industry should be expressly excluded, and that tin and oil companies should be allowed to have fair play. I have seen the case of a tin company which could go on earning its E.P.T. standard for 22 years but would cut down its life to 12 years by increasing its output to the 130 per cent. quota without receiving any additional profit. This would be tantamount to a capital levy of over 40 per cent. Is it fair?

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